اِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَهْدِيْ لِلَّتِيْ هِيَ اَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا كَبِيْرًا ۙ

Quran English Translation and Tafseer
Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi

Surah27 An-Naml

سُوْرَةُ النَّمْلِ مَكِّيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

(In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate)

طٰسٓمّٓ ۚ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ الْقُرْاٰنِ وَ كِتَابٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ۙ

(27-1) Ta'. Sin. These are the verses of the Qur'an and a Clear Book; (1)

(1) Kitabim-mubin has three meanings: (1) This book presents its teachings and instructions and injunctions plainly; (2) It distinguishes between the truth and falsehood clearly; and (3) Its being a divine Book is obvious. Whoever studies it with open eyes will realize that it has not been composed and forged by the Prophet (peace be upon him).

هُدًى وَّ بُشْرٰى لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۙ

(27-2) a guidance and good tidings (2) for the believers

(2) That is, the verses themselves are a “guidance” and “good tidings”, because they give guidance and convey good news in a most excellent manner.

الَّذِيۡنَ يُقِيۡمُوۡنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُؤۡتُوۡنَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَهُمۡ بِالۡاٰخِرَةِ هُمۡ يُوۡقِنُوۡنَ ۝٣

(27-3) who establish Prayer and give Zakah, (3) and have firm faith in the Hereafter. (4)

(3) That is, these verses of the Quran give guidance and convey the good news of a good end only to those people who possess these two qualities: (1) They should affirm faith, that is, accept the invitation of the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), believe in One God as their only Deity and Lord, accept the Quran as the Book of Allah, acknowledge the Prophet (peace be upon him) as a true prophet and their leader, and also adopt the belief that after this life there is another life, in which man has to render his full account of deeds and be rewarded or punished accordingly. (2) They should not only profess faith verbally, but should also be inclined to follow and obey the divine commands practically, and the first indication of this inclination is that they should establish the Salat and pay the Zakat. The verses of the Quran will show the right way of life only to those people who fulfill these two conditions; they will explain to them the difference between the right and the wrong at every stage on the way, protect them against the wrong ways at every turn of the way, and bless them with the satisfaction that whatever be the consequences of following the right way in the world. In the Hereafter, they will certainly attain the eternal and everlasting success and the good will of Allah only through it. For, in order to derive full benefit from the teaching of a teacher, one has first to have faith in him, then accept to be his student, and then work according to his instructions. Similarly, a patient who wants to be benefited by a doctor has first to accept him as a physician, and then follow his instructions with regard to medical dosage, prevention, etc. Then only he can assure the patient of the desired results.

Some people have interpreted the words yutun-az-zakat in this verse to mean that they should adopt moral purity. But, wherever in the Quran the word ita-i-zakat has occurred along with the word iqamat-i-salat, it means payment of the Zakat, which is the second pillar of Islam after the Salat. Moreover, the

Quran has used the word tazakka for adopting piety and purity and not ita which is specifically used for the payment of the Zakat. In fact, what is meant to be impressed here is this: In order to benefit fully by the guidance of the Quran, it is imperative that one should adopt the attitude of submission and obedience in practical life, as well after the affirmation of the faith, and the establishment of the Salat and the payment of the Zakat is the first indication that one has actually adopted such an attitude. If there is no such indication, it will become obvious that one is rebellious: he might have acknowledged a ruler as such, but he is not inclined to carry out his commands.

(4) Although belief in the Hereafter is an article of the faith, and a believer will also believe in it along with believing in Tauhid and the prophethood, here it has been specially mentioned separately in order to bring out its unique importance. The object is to impress that for those people who do not believe in the Hereafter, it is impossible to follow, even tread, the way taught by the Quran. For the people of this way of thinking naturally determine their criterion of good and evil by the results that appear, in this world. For them it is not possible to accept any admonition or guidance which seeks to determine the good and evil by the criterion of the gain and loss in the Hereafter. Such people in the first instance do not at all heed the teachings of the prophets, but if for some reason, they also get included among the believers, they find it difficult to take even the initial steps on the way of the faith and Islam because of the lack of faith in the Hereafter. For, as soon as they will encounter the first situation where the demands of the worldly gains and the losses of the Hereafter will pull them in opposite directions, they will freely allow themselves to be pulled towards the worldly gains without caring in the least for the losses of the Hereafter, even though they may be making all sort of claims to be the believers.

اِنَّ الَّذِيۡنَ لَا يُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ بِالۡاٰخِرَةِ زَيَّنَّا لَهُمۡ اَعۡمَالَهُمۡ فَهُمۡ يَعۡمَهُوۡنَ ۝٤

(27-4) As for those who do not believe in the Hereafter, We have made their deeds seem attractive to them so they stumble around in perplexity. (5)

(5) That is, this is God’s law of nature and the natural logic of human psychology that when man thinks that the results of his life’s struggle are confined to this world only when he does not believe in the existence of any court where his life's work has to be scrutinized and judged finally for good and evil, and when he does not believe in any life in Hereafter when he will be requited strictly in accordance with the real worth of his life’s deeds, he will inevitably develop in himself a material outlook on life, and every kind of conflict between the truth and falsehood, good and evil, morality and immorality, will appear utterly meaningless to him. Then, whatever earns him pleasure and enjoyment, material progress and prosperity, power and authority, will be the good for him, no matter it be any philosophy of life, any way of life and any system of morality. He will have no concern for truth and reality. His real ambition will be to win successes and earn adornments only of this worldly life, and their pursuit will lead him astray into every valley. Then, whatever he does with this object in view will be a thing of beauty for him, and he will regard all those others as foolish, who are not absorbed like him in seeking the world, and doing anything and everything without any moral qualm and inhibition.

أُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ لَهُمْ سُوْٓءُ الْعَذَابِ وَهُمْ فِى الْاٰخِرَةِ هُمُ الْاَخْسَرُوْنَ ۝٥

(27-5) It is they for whom a grievous chastisement lies in store; (6) it is they who shall be the greatest losers in the Hereafter.

(6) Nothing definite has been said about the form, time and place of this “worst of punishment.” For it is imposed in this world also on different persons and groups and nations in countless different ways; a part of it is also experienced by the wicked when they are about to leave the world; man experiences it also in the intermediary state between death and resurrection; and then after resurrection it will become endless and everlasting.

وَاِنَّكَ لَتُلَقَّى الْقُرْاٰنَ مِنْ لَّدُنْ حَكِيْمٍ عَلِيْمٍ ۝٦

(27-6) As for you, (O Muhammad), you are receiving the Qur'an from the Most Wise, the All-Knowing. [7]

(7) That is, the things being mentioned in the Quran are not imaginary, nor are they based on the presumptions and opinions of a man, but they are being revealed by the One Who is All-Wise and All-Knowing, Who is perfect in Wisdom and Knowledge, Who has full knowledge of the affairs of His creation and of its past and present and future, and Whose Wisdom devises the best schemes for the reform and guidance of His servants.

إِذۡ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِأَهۡلِهِۦٓ إِنِّيٓ ءَانَسۡتُ نَارٗاۖ سَـَٔاٰتِيكُم مِّنۡهَا بِخَبَرٍ أَوۡ ءَاتِيكُم بِشِهَابٖ قَبَسٖ لَّعَلَّكُمۡ تَصۡطَلُونَ ٧

(27-7) (Recount to them) when Moses said to his family: [8] "I perceive something like fire: soon will I bring to you some information from there, or I will bring you a burning brand that you may warm yourselves." [9]

(8) This happened at the foot of Mount Tur when the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was traveling along with his family in search of a suitable place for settlement, after passing eight to ten years in Madyan (Midian). From Madyan, whose territory lay on both sides of the Gulf of Aqabah, on the sea-shores of Arabia and the Sinai Peninsula, he reached the place called Mt. Sinai and Jabal Musa in the southern part of the Peninsula, which at the time of the revelation of the Quran was well known as Tur. See (Ash-Shuara, E.N. 115). The details of this story have been given in (Surah Ta Ha: Ayats 9-24), and in (Surah Al- Qasas: Ayats 29-36).

(9) The context shows that it was a cold wintry night and the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was passing through unfamiliar land. Therefore, he said to his family, “Let me go and find out what habitation it is where a fire is alight, and get some information about the traveling routes and the nearby habitations. I shall at least bring a few embers for you to light a fire and warm yourselves.” The place where the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had seen a burning bush is situated at about

5,000 ft. above sea level at the foot of Mt. Tur. Constantine, the first Christian Emperor of the Roman Empire, had a church built in about 365 A.D. right at the spot where this event had occurred. Two hundred years later Emperor Justinian had a monastery built which included the church built by Constantine as well. Both the monastery and the church stand even today and are under the control of the monks of the Greek Orthodox Church.

فَلَمَّا جَآءَهَا نُوۡدِىَ اَنۡۢ بُوۡرِكَ مَنۡ فِى النَّارِ وَمَنۡ حَوۡلَهَا ؕ وَسُبۡحٰنَ اللّٰهِ رَبِّ الۡعٰلَمِيۡنَ ﴿۸﴾

(27-8) But when Moses came to the fire, a call was sounded: [10] "Blessed is He Who is in the fire and whatever is around it. Glory be to Allah, the Sustainer of all in the Universe. [11]

(10) According to (Al-Qasas: Ayat 30), the voice was calling out from a tree. What one understands from this is this: A sort of a fire was alight on the ground on the edge of the valley, but neither was anything burning nor any smoke arising. In the midst of the fire there stood a lush green tree from which a voice started calling out this all of a sudden.

This is a strange thing which the prophets of Allah have been experiencing. When the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was first blessed with prophethood, an angel appeared before him in the solitude of the cave of Hira and started delivering Allah's message. A similar thing happened with the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) also. A journeying person has halted at a place, sees a fire at a distance, approaches it in order to get some information abort the route, or to pick a burning ember, and suddenly Allah, Lord of the Worlds, the Infinite, the Inconceivable Being, starts speaking to him. On such occasions, there exists externally as well as within the Prophets' own selves an extraordinary state which fills them with the assurance that it is not a jinn or a satan or an illusion of their own mind, nor are their senses being deceived, but it is the Lord of the universe, or His Angel, who is speaking to them. (See (E.N. 10 of Surah An-Najm).

(11) Here the use of the words Subhan-Allah (glorified is Allah) is meant to warn the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) to this effect: “You should never think that Allah, Lord of the universe, is sitting in the tree, or has entered into it, or that His absolute Light has concentrated itself into the limited sphere of your sight, or some tongue is functioning in some mouth to produce speech, but it is Allah, Who is Pure and Free from all such limitations, Who is Himself speaking to you.”

يٰمُوسٰٓى اِنَّهٗٓ اَنَا اللّٰهُ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ۙ

(27-9) O Moses, verily this is Me, Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise!

وَاَلْقِ عَصَاكَ ؕ فَلَمَّا رَاٰهَا تَهْتَزُّ كَاَنَّهَا جَآنٌّ وَّلّٰى مُدْبِرًا وَّلَمْ يُعَقِّبْ ؕ يٰمُوْسٰى لَا تَخَفْ اِنِّىْ لَا يَخَافُ لَدَىَّ الْمُرْسَلُوْنَ ۙ١٠

(27-10) Now cast your rod!" But when he saw the rod writhing as though it were a serpent, (12) he turned his back in retreat and did not even look behind. "O Moses, have no fear. Messengers have no fear in My presence, (13)

(12) In Surahs Al-Aaraf and Ash-Shuara, the snake has been called thuban (a large serpent) but here jaann, a small snake. The reason is that in physical size it was a serpent but in movement it was swift like a small snake. The same thing has been expressed by hayyatun tasaa (a running snake) in (Surah Ta Ha: Ayat 20).

(13) That is, “In My presence there is no danger of any harm to the messenger. When I call someone into My presence to appoint him to the high office of prophethood, I Myself become responsible for his safety. Therefore, the messenger should remain fearless and confident in every kind of unusual situation: it will never harm or hurt him in any way.”

اِلَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ ثُمَّ بَدَّلَ حُسْنًۢا بَعْدَ سُوْٓءٍ فَاِنِّىْ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ۙ١١

(27-11) except he who has committed some wrong. [14] But if he substitutes good in place of evil, I am Most Forgiving, Most Compassionate. [15]

(14) This exception can be contiguous as well as remote. In the first case it will imply that there can be a genuine cause of fear if the messenger has committed an offense; in the second case it will mean: “None should have any cause of fear in My presence, unless, of course, someone has committed an offense.”

(15) That is, “If even an offender repents and reforms himself and does good instead of evil, I will pardon him.” This implied both a warning and a good news. The Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had killed a Copt inadvertently and fled from Egypt. This was an offense to which a subtle reference was made. When this offense was committed unintentionally by the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), he had immediately offered repentance to Allah, saying, “O my Lord! I have sinned against myself, so forgive me.” So, “Allah forgave him” there and then. (Surah Al-Qasas: Ayat 16). Here the good news of the same forgiveness has been given to him, as if to say, “O Moses, there could be a genuine cause for you to feel afraid in My presence, because you had committed an offense, but when you have changed the evil into good, I have nothing but forgiveness and mercy for you. I have not called you here at this time to punish you, but I am going to send you on a great mission with wonderful miracles.”

وَ اَ دۡخِ يَدَکَ فِیۡ جَیۡبِکَ تَ خۡرُجۡ بَیۡضَآءَ مِنۡ غَ یۡرِ سُوۡٓءٍ ؕ فِ تِسۡعِ اٰیٰتٍ اِلٰی فِرۡعَوۡنَ وَ قَوۡ مِہٖ ؕ اِنَّہُمۡ کَانُوۡا قَوۡمًا فٰسِقِیۡنَ ﴿۱۲﴾

(27-12) Now put your hand into your bosom, and it will come forth shining without any blemish. (These are two of the) nine Signs [16] to be carried to Pharaoh and his people. They are surely a wicked people."

(16) According to (Surah Bani-Israil: Ayat 101), the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had been granted nine clearly visible signs, which according to the details given in Surah Al-Aaraf were the following: (1) The staff’s turning into a serpent, (2) the shining hand

when it was drawn out of the armpit, (3) public triumph over the magicians, (4) occurrence of a widespread famine in the land as foretold by the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), (5) the storm, (6) the locusts, (7) the incidence of weevils in the grain stores and of lice among human beings and animals, (8) the frogs, and (9) the rain of blood. (See (E.N. 43 of Surah Az- Zukhruf).

فَلَمَّا جَآءَتۡهُمۡ اٰيٰتُنَا مُبۡصِرَةً قَالُوۡا هٰذَا سِحۡرٌ مُّبِيۡنٌ ١٣

(27-13) But when Our Clear Signs came to them, they said: "This is plain magic."

وَجَحَدُوۡا بِهَا وَاسۡتَيۡقَنَتۡهَاۤ اَنۡفُسُهُمۡ ظُلۡمًا وَّعُلُوًّا ؕ فَانۡظُرۡ كَيۡفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الۡمُفۡسِدِيۡنَ ١٤

(27-14) They denied those Signs out of iniquity and arrogance although their hearts were convinced (17) of their truth. So see how evil was the end of those mischief-makers!

(17) As mentioned at other places in the Quran, whenever a plague befell Egypt as foretold by the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), Pharaoh would say, “O Moses, pray to your Lord to remove this plague; then we shall submit to what you say.” But as soon as the plague was removed, Pharaoh would break his promise. (Surah Al-Aaraf: Ayat 134), (Az- Zukhruf: Ayats 49-50). The Bible also has mentioned it (Exodus. 8 to 10). It could not be imagined that the occurrence of a famine throughout the country, and the coming of a violent storm, and the incidence of the locusts and the frogs and the weevils in such abundance could be due to any trick of magic. The miracles were so manifest that even a simple minded person could not help but realize that the occurrence of the plagues on such a large scale and their removal at the Prophet’s prayer could be only due to Allah, Lord of all Creation’s Power and Authority. That is why the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had told Pharaoh plainly: “You know it full well that none but the Lord of the heavens and the earth has sent down these signs.” (Surah Bani-Israil: Ayat 102). But the reason why Pharaoh and his chiefs rejected Moses (peace be upon him) knowingly was: “What! should we believe in these two men who are human

beings like ourselves and whose people are our bondsmen?” (Surah Al-Muminun: Ayat 47).

وَ لَقَدۡ اٰتَیۡنَا دَاوٗدَ وَ سُلَیۡمٰنَ عِلۡمًا ۚ وَ قَالَا الۡحَمۡدُ لِلّٰہِ الَّذِیۡ فَضَّلَنَا عَلٰی کَثِیۡرٍ مِّنۡ عِبَادِہِ الۡمُؤۡمِنِیۡنَ ﴿۱۵﴾

(27-15) (On the other hand), We granted knowledge to David and Solomon (18) and they said: "All praise be to Allah Who has exalted us above many of His believing servants!" (19)

(18) That is, the knowledge of the reality, the knowledge that whatever they have is not theirs but the gift of Allah and whatever rights they have been granted over those things should be used strictly according to Allah’s will. For, they will be held answerable before Allah, the real Owner, for the right and wrong use of those rights. This knowledge is the opposite of the ignorance in which Pharaoh was involved. The type of character built on the ignorance has been presented in the preceding verses. Now, in the following verses, the model of the character built on the knowledge is being presented. The sort of kingdom, wealth, power and grandeur were common on both sides. The Pharaoh had been given these as well as the Prophets David and Solomon. But the distinction of the ignorance and the knowledge built and molded them into entirely different personalities.

(19) That is, “There were other believing, servants as well, who could be blessed with vicegerency. But it is only Allah’s favor, not due to any special quality in ourselves, that He has chosen us to be rulers over this kingdom.”

وَ وَرِثَ سُلَيْمٰنُ دَاوٗدَ وَ قَالَ يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ عُلِّمْنَا مَنْطِقَ الطَّيْرِ وَ اُوْتِيْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ؕ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَهُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿۱۶﴾

(27-16) And Solomon succeeded David [20] and said: "O people, we have been taught the speech of birds [21] and we have been endowed with all kinds of things. [22] Surely this is a conspicuous favour (from Allah)."

(20) Succession here does not mean inheritance of wealth and properties, but the succession to the Prophet David (peace be upon him) in the prophethood and vicegerency. For the wealth and possessions, if at all transferred, could not be transferred to the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) only, because Prophet David (peace be upon him) had other children also. Therefore, this verse cannot be cited to refute the Hadith reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him), saying, “The inheritance left by us, the Prophets, is not divided as such. Whatever we leave behind is charity.” (Bukhari). And, “There is no heir to a Prophet. Whatever he leaves behind is divided among the needy and the indigent of the Muslims.” (Musnad Ahmad).

The Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) was the youngest son of the Prophet David (peace be upon him). His Hebrew name Solomon is a synonym of Salim (rightminded, affable). He succeeded the Prophet David (peace be upon him) in 965 B.C. and ruled his kingdom for forty years, till 926 B.C. (For other details of his life and works, see(E.N. 74-75 of Surah Al-Anbiyah). Our commentators have greatly exaggerated the vastness of his kingdom, and have held that he ruled over a large part of the world. The fact, however, is that his kingdom comprised only the present Palestine and Transjordan and a part of Syria.

(21) There is no mention in the Bible that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) had been taught speech of the birds and animals, though the Israelite traditions contain a reference to it.

(22) That is, “Allah has bestowed on us all sorts of things.” This, however, should not be understood literally; it only means

the abundance of the wealth and the means of life granted by Allah. This was not said proudly by Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) but only to express his gratitude to Allah for His grace and bounty and favors.

وَ حُشِرَ لِسُلَيۡمٰنَ جُنُوۡدُهٗ مِنَ الۡجِنِّ وَ الۡاِنۡسِ وَ الطَّيۡرِ فَهُمۡ يُوۡزَعُوۡنَ ﴿۱۷﴾

(27-17) Hosts of jinn and humans and birds [23] were marshalled for Solomon and were kept under full control.

(23) The Bible does not either make any mention that there were jinns in the Prophet Solomon's (peace be upon him) armies, and he took service from them; but the Talmud and the rabbinical traditions contain details of this. Some of the present-day writers have strained every nerve to prove that the words jinn and tair do not refer to the jinns and birds but to men who performed different duties in the Prophet Solomon's (peace be upon him) army. They say that the Jinn were the people of the mountain tribes whom Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) had subdued and who performed tasks of great strength and skill under him; and tair implies cavalry which could move much faster than the infantry. But these are indeed the worst examples of misinterpreting the Quran. The Quran here mentions three distinct kinds of the army consisting of the men, the jinns and the birds, and all the three have been qualified by the prefix al (alif-lam) to denote a class. Therefore, al-jinn and al-tair could not be included in al-ins (the men), but could be two separate and different classes from the men. Moreover, a person who has a little acquaintance with Arabic cannot imagine that in this language the mere word al-Jinn could ever imply a group of the men, or al-tair as troops mounted on horses, nor could any Arab understand these meanings from these words. Calling a man a jinn because of some supernatural feat of his, or a woman a fairy because of her beauty, or a fast moving person a bird, does not mean that the words jinn and fairy and bird will henceforth be taken to mean a powerful man and a beautiful woman and a fast moving person respectively. These are only the metaphoric and not the real meanings of these words. In a discourse, a word is used in its figurative instead of its real meaning, and the listeners

also will take it in that meaning, only when there exists in the context a clear pointer to its being figurative. What, after all, is the pointer in the context here from which one may understand that the words jinn and tair have been used not in their real and lexical meaning but in their figurative meaning? Contrary to this, the work and the state of a member each of the two groups that have been mentioned in the following verses, fall entirely against the purport of this interpretation. If a person does not want to believe in something stated in the Quran, he should frankly say that he does not believe in it. But it would be moral cowardice and intellectual dishonesty if one should force the clear words of the Quran to give the meaning that he wants them to give, and tells the world that he believes in what the Quran says, whereas he does not, in fact, believe in it but believes in his own distorted meaning.

حَتّٰٓى اِذَآ اَتَوۡا عَلٰى وَادِ النَّمۡلِ ۙ قَالَتۡ نَمۡلَةٌ يّٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّمۡلُ ادۡخُلُوۡا مَسٰكِنَكُمۡ ۚ لَا يَحۡطِمَنَّكُمۡ سُلَيۡمٰنُ وَجُنُوۡدُهٗ ۙ وَهُمۡ لَا يَشۡعُرُوۡنَ ﴿۱۸﴾

(27-18) (Solomon was once on the move with them) until when they reached a valley of ants one of the ants said: "O ants, get into your holes, lest Solomon and his hosts crush you (under their feet) without even knowing." (24)

(24) This verse also has been greatly misconstrued by some commentators of the present day. They say that wad-in naml does not mean “valley of the ants”, but it is the name of a valley that was in Syria, and namlah does not mean an ant but it is the name of a tribe. Thus, according to them, the verse means this: “When the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) reached the valley of the ants, a Namilite said, O people of the Naml tribe .....” But this also is an interpretation which is not supported by the words of the Quran. Even if we took wad-in-naml to be the name of a valley and supposed that it was inhabited by the tribe of Bani an-Naml, it would be against the Arabic idiom and usage to speak of a member of the tribe as namlah. Although there are many Arab tribes which have been named after the animals, e.g. Kalb (dog), Asad (lion), etc. Yet no Arab would ever say in respect of a member of the Kalb or the Asad tribe: “A dog said, or a lion

said, etc.” Therefore, it would be against the Arabic idiom to say in respect of a member of the Naml tribe: “An ant (namlah) said this.” Then a member of the Naml tribe’s warning the people of his tribe, saying, “O Namilites, get into your houses lest Solomon’s hosts should trample you down without even knowing it,” becomes meaningless, It has never happened that an army of men should have trampled down a group of men without knowing it. If the army has come with the intention of an attack, it would be useless for the other side to get into their houses, for in that case the invaders would follow them into their houses, and trample them more ruthlessly. And if the army is only on the routine march, it is just enough to clear off the way for it. Human beings may be harmed by the marching columns, but it can never happen that the soldiers on the march would trample down other men without knowing it. Therefore, if Bani an-Naml were a tribe of human beings, and one of its members were to warn his people, then in case of an attack, he would have said, “O Namilites, flee your houses and take refuge in the mountains lest Solomon’s armies should destroy you.” And in case there was no danger of an attack, he would have said, “O Namilites, clear off the way lest one of you should be harmed by the marching columns of Solomon’s armies.”

This error in the interpretation is on account of the Arabic idiom and the subject-matter. As for the name of the valley and the tribe of Bani an-Naml inhabiting it, it is a mere hypothesis for which there exists no scientific proof. Those who hold that wad-in-naml was the name of a valley have themselves pointed out that it had been so named because of the abundance of ants in it. Qatadah and Muqatil say, “It is a valley in the land of Syria where ants are found in abundance.” But in no book of history and geography and in no archaeological research it is mentioned that it was inhabited by a tribe called Bani an-Naml. Thus, it is merely a concoction that has been invented to support one’s own interpretation.

This story is also found in the Israelite traditions but its latter portion falls against the Quran as well as against the real dignity of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him). According to

it, when the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) was passing through a valley which abounded in ants, he heard an ant calling out to the other ants to say, “Get into your holes, otherwise you will be trampled down by Solomon's hosts.” At this, Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) displayed great vanity before the ant to which the ant said, “What are you? - the product of a mere sperm drop!” Hearing this the Prophet Solomon felt greatly ashamed. This shows how the Quran corrects the wrong traditions of the Israelites, and cleanses the filthy spots with which they had themselves branded the characters of their prophets. It is these traditions about which the Western orientalists shamelessly claim that the Quran has plagiarized them for its narratives.

Rationally also, it is not at all inconceivable that an ant should warn members of its own species of an impending danger and tell them to get into their holes. As for the question as to how the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) heard it, the answer is: It is not all difficult to understand the crude speech of an ant for a person whose senses can comprehend and receive a subtle message like the word of revelation.

فَتَبَسَّمَ ضَاحِكًا مِّنْ قَوْلِهَا وَقَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِيٓ أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِيٓ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَىٰهُ وَأَدْخِلْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي عِبَادِكَ الصَّٰلِحِينَ ١٩

(27-19) Smiling at the ant's utterance, Solomon burst into laughter and said: "My Lord! Hold me under (Your) control (25) that I may render thanks for the favour which You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may act righteously in a manner that would please You. Include me, out of Your Mercy, among Your righteous servants." (26)

(25) “Bestow upon me that I may be thankful” means this: “O my Lord! The wonderful powers and abilities that You have given me are such that if I become even a little forgetful and heedless, I might transgress the bounds of service and be puffed up with pride and go astray. Therefore, O my Lord, bestow upon me so that I may remain grateful to You for all Your blessings instead of being ungrateful.”

(26) “And admit me by Your mercy among Your righteous slaves” probably implies this: “I should be included among the righteous in the Hereafter and should enter Paradise along with them.” For a person who does righteous acts will automatically be righteous, but one’s entry into Paradise in the Hereafter cannot come about merely on the strength of one’s good works, but it will depend on Allah’s mercy. According to a Hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) once said, “Merely the deeds of any one of you will not enable him to enter Paradise.” It was asked, “In your case too, O Messenger of Allah?” He replied, “Yes, I also shall not enter Paradise only on the strength of my deeds, unless Allah Almighty covers me with His mercy.”

This prayer of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) on this occasion becomes irrelevant if an-namal is taken to mean a tribe of human beings and namlah a member of that tribe. After all, there could be nothing extraordinary in the warning given by a member of a human tribe to the people of his tribe about the approaching troops of a powerful king that it should have induced the king to make such a prayer to Allah. However, a person having such a wonderful power of comprehension that he may hear the speech of an ant from a distance and also understand it, is certainly something extraordinary, which can involve a person in self-conceit and vanity. In such a case only the prayer of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) can be relevant.

وَ تَفَقَّدَ الطَّ ۡیرَ فَقَالَ مَا لِیَ لَا اَرَی الۡ ہُدۡہُدَ اَ ۡم کَانَ مِنَ الۡ ﴿۲۰﴾ غَآئِبِیۡنَ

(27-20) (On another occasion) Solomon inspected the birds (27) and said: "Why is it that I do not see the hoopoe? Is he among the absentees?

(27) That is, the birds whose troops, as mentioned above, were included in the armies of Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) like the troops of the men and jinns. It is just possible that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) had employed them for communicating messages, hunting and performing other such services.

لَأُعَذِّبَنَّهُۥ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا أَوْ لَأَا۟حْ لَأَنَّهُۥ بِسُلْطَٰنٍ مُّبِينٍ ٢١

(27-21) I will inflict a severe punishment on him or maybe even slaughter him unless he comes forth with a convincing reason (for his absence)." (28)

(28) Some people of the modern time say that the hud-hud (hoopoe) does not mean the bird commonly known by this name, but is the name of a man who was an officer in the army of Solomon. This claim is not based on any historical research in which they might have found a person named hud-hud included in the list of the officers of the government of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him), but they base their claim on the argument that the custom of naming human beings after animals is prevalent in Arabic as in other languages and was also found in Hebrew. Moreover, the work that has been ascribed to the hud-hud in the following verses and its conversation with the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) can, according to them, be only performed by a human being. But if one keeps in view the context in which this thing occurs in the Quran, it becomes evident that this is no commentary of the Quran but its distortion. After all, why should the Quran put the intellect and intelligence of man to the test by using enigmatic language? Why should it not clearly say that a soldier of the Prophet Solomon's (peace be upon him) cavalry, or platoon, or communication department, was missing, whom he ordered to be searched out, and who came and gave this news and whom he dispatched on such and such a mission? Instead, it uses such language that the reader, from the beginning to the end, is compelled to regard it as a bird. Let us, in this connection, consider the parts in their sequence as presented in the Quran.

First of all, Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) expresses his gratitude to Allah for His this bounty: "We have been taught the speech of the birds." In this sentence, firstly, the word tair has been used absolutely which every Arab and scholar of Arabic will take in the meaning of a bird, because there is nothing in the context that points to its being figurative; secondly, if tair implied a group of men and not a bird, the word language or

tongue would have been used concerning it and not speech. Then, a person's knowing the tongue of another people is not so extraordinary a thing that it should be specially mentioned. Today there are among us thousands of men and women, who can speak and understand many foreign languages. This is in no way an unusual achievement which may be mentioned as an extraordinary gift of God.

Then the Quran says, "For Solomon (peace be upon him) were gathered hosts of jinns and then and birds." In this sentence, firstly, the words jinn and ins (men) and tair have been used as names for three well-known and distinct species denoted by these words in Arabic. Then they have been used absolutely and there is nothing in the context that may point to any of them being used metaphorically, or as a simile, because of which one may take them in another meaning than their well-known lexical meaning. Then the word ins has occurred between the words jinn and tair which does not allow taking it in the meaning that the jinn and the tair were, in tact, two groups included in the species of ins (men). Had this been meant the words would have been: ul jinn wat-tair min-al-ins and not min-al-jinn wal-ins wat-tair.

A little further on, the Quran says that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) said this when during his review of the birds he found the hud-hud missing. If the tair were human beings and hud-hud also was the name of a man, a word or two should have been there to indicate this so that the poor reader should not have taken the word for a bird. When the group being mentioned is clearly of the birds and a member of it is called hud-hud, how can it be expected that the reader will of his own accord understand them to be human beings?

Then the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) says, "I will punish him severely, or even slaughter him, unless he presents before me a reasonable excuse." A man is killed, or hanged, or sentenced to death, but never slaughtered. Some hard-hearted person may even slaughter another person out of vengeance, but it cannot be expected of a Prophet (peace be upon him) that he would sentence a soldier of his army to be

slaughtered only for the offense of desertion, and Allah would mention this heinous act of the Prophet (peace be upon him) without a word of disapproval.

A little further on, we shall again see that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) sends the same hud-hud with a letter to the queen of Sheba and tells him “to cast it before her”. Obviously, such an instruction can be given to a bird but not at all to a man when he is sent as an envoy or messenger. Only a foolish person will believe that a king would send his envoy with a letter to the queen of another country and tell him to cast or throw it before her. Should we suppose that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) was not aware of the preliminary social etiquette which even common people like us also observe when we send our servant to a neighbor? Will a gentleman tell his servant to carry his letter to the other gentleman and throw it before him?

All these things show that the word hud-hud here has been used in its lexical meaning, showing that he was not a man but a bird. Now, if a person is not prepared to believe that a hud-hud can speak those things that have been ascribed to it in the Quran, he should frankly say that he does not believe in this narrative of the Quran. It is sheer hypocrisy to misconstrue plain and clear words of the Quran according to one’s own whims only in order to cover up one’s lack of faith in it.

فَمَكَثَ غَيۡرَ بَعِيۡدٍ فَقَالَ اَحَطۡتُّ بِمَا لَمۡ تُحِطۡ بِهٖ وَجِئۡتُكَ مِنۡ سَبَاٍ بِنَبَاٍ يَّقِيۡنٍ ﴿۲۲﴾

(27-22) Not before long the hoopoe came up and said: "I have obtained a knowledge which you could not. I have brought for you sure news about Sheba. (29)

(29) Sheba were a well-known commercial people of southern Arabia, whose capital city of Marib lay about 55 miles to the north east of Sana, the present capital of Yaman. They rose to power after the decline of the Minaean Kingdom in about 1100 B.C. and flourished for a thousand years in Arabia. Then in 115 B.C. they

were replaced by the Himyarites, the other well-known people of southern Arabia, who ruled Yaman and Hadramaut in Arabia and Habash in Africa. The Sabaeans controlled the whole trade that passed between eastern Africa, India, the Far East and Arabia, as well as Egypt, Syria, Greece and Rome. That is why they were famous for their wealth in the ancient times; so much so that according to the Greek historians they were the richest people of the world. Besides trade and commerce, another great reason for their prosperity was that they had built dams here and there in their country to store rainwater for irrigation purposes, which had turned their whole land into a veritable garden. The Greek historians have made mention of the unusual greenery of their country; and the Quran also refers to it in (Surah Saba: Ayat 15). The statement of the hud-hud, "I have obtained knowledge of things of which you have no knowledge", does not imply that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) was wholly unaware of Saba. Obviously, the ruler of Syria and Palestine whose kingdom extended to the northern shores of the Red Sea (Gulf of Aqabah), could not be unaware of a people who ruled the southern shores (Yaman) of the same Red Sea, and who also controlled an important pan of the international trade. Moreover, according to Psalms, Solomon's father, Prophet David (peace be upon them), knew Saba. We find the following words of his prayer in Psalms.

"Give the king thy judgment, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son (i.e. Solomon). The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba (i.e. of Yaman's and Habash's branches) shall offer gifts."

Therefore, what the hud-hud means to say is this: "The knowledge of the things I have seen with my eyes in the central city of the Sabaeans has not yet reached you."

اِنِّیۡ وَجَدۡتُّ امۡرَاَۃً تَمۡلِکُہُمۡ وَاُوۡتِیَتۡ مِنۡ کُلِّ شَیۡءٍ وَّلَہَا عَرۡشٌ عَظِیۡمٌ ﴿۲۳﴾

(27-23) I found there a woman ruling over them, one who has been endowed with all things and has a mighty throne.

وَجَدتُّهَا وَقَوْمَهَا يَسْجُدُونَ لِلشَّمْسِ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَصَدَّهُمْ
عَنِ السَّبِيلِ فَهُمْ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ ٢٤

(27-24) I found that she and her people prostrate themselves before the sun rather than Allah. (30) " Satan (31) has made their deeds appear attractive to them (32) and has, thus, debarred them from the Right Path so they do not find true guidance

(30) This shows that the people of Saba at that time followed the religion of sun-worship, which is also supported by the ancient traditions of Arabia. Ibn Ishaq has cited the genealogists saying to the effect that Saba have in fact descended from an ancestor whose name was Abd Shams (slave of the sun, or sun-worshiper) and title Saba. This is supported by the Israelite traditions as well. According to these when the hud-hud arrived with the Prophet Solomon's (peace be upon him) letter, the queen of Sheba was going for the worship of the sun-god, and it threw the letter on the way before the queen.

(31) The style shows that the sentences from here to the end of the paragraph are not a part of the hud-hud's speech but its speech ended with: "they prostrate themselves before the sun", and these words are an addition by Allah to its speech. His opinion is supported by the sentence: "He knows all that you conceal and reveal." These words give the impression that the speaker and the addressees here are not the hud-hud and the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) and his courtiers respectively, but the speaker is Allah and the addressees the mushriks of Makkah, for whose admonition this story has been related. From among the commentators, Allamah Alusi, the author of Ruh-al-Maani, also has preferred the same opinion.

(32) That is, Satan has made them believe that earning the worldly wealth and making their lives more and more grand and pompous is the only real and best use of their mental and intellectual and physical powers. Apart from these, they need not think seriously of anything else: they need not bother themselves to see whether there was any factual reality behind the apparent

life of the world or not. And whether the basis of their religion, morality, culture and system of life accorded with that reality or went utterly against it. Satan satisfied them that when they were making adequate progress in respect of wealth and power and worldly grandeur, they had no need to see whether their beliefs and philosophies and theories were correct or not, for the only proof of their being correct was that they were earning wealth and enjoying life to their hearts content.

اَلَّا يَسۡجُدُوۡا لِلّٰهِ الَّذِىۡ يُخۡرِجُ الۡخَبۡءَ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الۡاَرۡضِ وَ يَعۡلَمُ مَا تُخۡفُوۡنَ وَ مَا تُعۡلِنُوۡنَ ﴿۲۵﴾

(27-25) that they would prostrate themselves before Allah Who brings to light all that is hidden in the heavens and the earth (33) and knows all that you conceal and all that you reveal. (34)

(33) That is, He is bringing continuously into existence those things which before their birth were hidden here and there. He is bringing out continuously countless kinds of vegetation and minerals from the bowels of the earth. He is manifesting from upper space such things as could not even be conceived by the human mind before their manifestation.

(34) That is, His knowledge embraces everything, the open and hidden are alike for Him. He is aware of everything. By citing these two attributes of Allah the object is to impress that if they had not been deluded by Satan, they could have seen the right way clearly. They could have perceived that the hot burning sphere of the sun which has no sense of its own existence, did not deserve to be worshiped but worship was due to Him alone who is the All-Knowing and the All-Wise Being, and whose power is bringing into existence new and ever new phenomena every moment.

اَللّٰهُ لَاۤ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ رَبُّ الۡعَرۡشِ الۡعَظِيۡمِ ﴿۲۶﴾

(27-26) Allah - none is worthy of worship save He; He is the Lord of the Mighty Throne. (35)

(35) This is one of the verses of the Quran, where its recital makes it obligatory to perform a Sajdah (prostration), and there is a consensus on this of the Muslim jurists. The object of performing a Sajdah here is that a believer should set himself apart from the sun-worshipers and should declare by his action that he does not regard the sun but Allah Almighty alone as his Deity and Lord.

قَالَ سَنَنظُرُ أَصَدَقْتَ أَمْ كُنتَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾

(27-27) Solomon said: "Soon shall we see whether you have spoken the truth or are one of those that lie.

اذْهَب بِّكِتَابِي هَٰذَا فَأَلْقِهْ إِلَيْهِمْ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ فَانظُرْ مَاذَا يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

(27:28) Take this letter of mine, deliver it to them, and then draw back from them, and observe what they do." (36)

(36) Here ends the role of the hud-hud (hoopoe). The rationalists deny its being a bird for the reason that a bird could not possibly be endowed with such powers of observation, discrimination and expression that it should pass over a country and should come to know that it is the land of Saba, it has such and such a system of government, it is ruled by a certain woman, its religion is sun worship, that it should have worshiped One God instead of having gone astray, and then on its return to the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) it should so clearly make a report of all its observations before him. Due to these very reasons the open atheists object that the Quran is a book of fables and legends; then those who try to interpret the Quran rationally misconstrue its clear words in order to prove that the hud-hud was not at all a bird but he was a man. But the question is: What scientific information do these people have by which they could tell, with absolute certainty, what powers and abilities do the different species of animals and their different individuals have? The information that they possess only consists of the results inferred from the grossly insufficient observation made by them of the life and behavior of the animals. In fact, man has not so far been able to know through any certain means what different animals know and what they see and hear, and what

they feel and think and understand, and how the mind of each one of them works. Yet, whatever little observation has been made of the life of the different species of animals, it has revealed some of their wonderful abilities. Now, when Allah, Who is the Creator of these animals, tells us that He had taught the speech of the birds to one of His Prophets and blessed him with the ability to speak to them, and the Prophet's taming and training had so enabled a hud-hud that it could make certain observations in the foreign lands and could report that to the Prophet, we should in fact, be prepared to revise our little knowledge about the animals in the light of Allah's statement. But, instead, we commit the folly of taking our insufficient knowledge as the criterion and belie this statement of Allah or distort it out of its true meaning.

قَالَ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْمَلَؤُا اِنِّيْٓ اُلْقِيَ اِلَيَّ كِتٰبٌ كَرِيْمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾

(27-29) The Queen said:" Know my nobles that a gracious letter has been delivered to me.

اِنَّهٗ مِنْ سُلَيْمٰنَ وَاِنَّهٗ بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ ﴿٣٠﴾

(27-30) It is from Solomon, and it is: "In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate."

اَلَّا تَعۡلُوۡا عَلَیَّ وَاۡتُوۡنِیۡ مُسۡلِمِیۡنَ ﴿۳۱﴾

(27-31) (It says): "Do not act towards me with defiance, but come to me in submission." (37)

(37) That is, “The letter is important for several reasons: (1) It has reached me in an unusual way. Instead of an envoy it has been brought and dropped at me by a bird. (2) It is from Solomon, the great ruler of Palestine and Syria. (3) It begins with the name of Allah, the Compassionate, and Merciful, which is an unusual way of correspondence and is not followed by any kingdom in the world. (4) Then, it is also unusual that a letter should be written only in the name of Allah, the Exalted, spare from all other gods and goddesses. (5) The most important thing in it is that it quite clearly and plainly invites us to give up rebellion and adopt obedience and present ourselves before Solomon in submission (or as Muslims).” “Come to me in submission” can have two meanings:
(1) “Present yourselves in submission”; and (2) “present yourselves as Muslims (after embracing Islam).” The first meaning is in accordance with the Prophet Solomon’s (peace be upon him) position as a ruler, and the second with his position as a prophet. Probably this comprehensive word was used in order to convey both the meanings through the letter. The same sort of invitation has always been extended by Islam to independent nations and governments that they should either accept Islam and become equal partners in the Islamic system of life, or surrender political independence and submit to the system of Islam and pay Jizyah.

قَالَ یٰۤاَیُّهَا الۡمَلَؤُا اَفۡتُوۡنِیۡ فِیۡۤ اَمۡرِیۡ مَا کُنۡتُ قَاطِعَةً اَمۡرًا حَتّٰی تَشۡهَدُوۡنِ ﴿۳۲﴾

(27-32) (After reading the letter) the Queen said: "Nobles, let me have your counsel in this matter for I make no firm decision without you." (38)

(38) The words used in the text are: hatta tash-hu-dun (until you are present, or unless you bear witness). That is: “I regard your presence necessary when I take a decision in important matters, and also that whatever decision I take you should be

there to testify that it is right and correct.” This shows that though the system of government among Saba was kingship, it was not tyrannical; but the ruler of the time decided matters in consultation with the important people in the government.

قَالُوا نَحۡنُ اُولُوۡا قُوَّةٍ وَّ اُولُوۡا بَاۡسٍ شَدِيۡدٍ ۙ وَّالۡاَمۡرُ اِلَيۡكِ فَانۡظُرِىۡ مَاذَا تَاۡمُرِيۡنَ ۳۳

(27-33) They said: "We are strong and are given to vehement fighting. But the decision is yours. Therefore, consider what you would like to command."

قَالَتۡ اِنَّ الۡمُلُوۡكَ اِذَا دَخَلُوۡا قَرۡيَةً اَفۡسَدُوۡهَا وَ جَعَلُوۡۤا اَعِزَّةَ اَهۡلِهَاۤ اَذِلَّةً ۚ وَ كَذٰلِكَ يَفۡعَلُوۡنَ ۳۴

(27-34) The Queen said: "When the kings enter a country they cause corruption in it and abase those of its people who are held in honour.(39) This is what they are wont to do. (40)

(39) In this one sentence a thorough criticism has been made of imperialism. The kings’ invasion of the other countries and the victorious nations’ violence against the oppressed nations has never been for the sake of reform and goodwill. The object has been to control and exploit the means and resources of sustenance granted to the other nation by God, and make it so helpless that it should never be able to rise in resistance and demand its share. For this purpose they block up all its means of prosperity, power and honor, crush down all self respecting elements, instill in its members attitudes of slavery, flattery, treachery and spying against one another, imitation of the conqueror and respect for his civilization, contempt of their own civilization and other such mean qualities of character. Thus, gradually they bring them down to such a low level of character where they may not hesitate even to sell off any of their most sacred objects of heritage and be ready to perform any wretched service on payment.

(40) This sentence has two meanings and both are equally probable: (1) It may be a part of the queen of Sheba’s speech, which she might have added in order to emphasize her foregoing

words; and (2) it may be Allah's words which have been added as a parenthesis in support of the queen's speech.

وَاِنِّیۡ مُرۡسِلَۃٌ اِلَیۡہِمۡ بِہَدِیَّۃٍ فَنٰظِرَۃٌۢ بِمَ یَرۡجِعُ الۡمُرۡسَلُوۡنَ ﴿۳۵﴾

(27-35) I will send them a gift and then see with what answer my envoys return."

فَلَمَّا جَآءَ سُلَیۡمٰنَ قَالَ اَتُمِدُّوۡنَنِ بِمَالٍ فَمَاۤ اٰتٰىنِۦَ اللّٰہُ خَیۡرٌ مِّمَّاۤ اٰتٰىکُمۡ بَلۡ اَنۡتُمۡ بِہَدِیَّتِکُمۡ تَفۡرَحُوۡنَ ﴿۳۶﴾

(27-36) Now, when (the envoy of the Queen) came to Solomon, he said: "Do you want to aid me with wealth? Whatever Allah has granted me is much more than what He has given you. (41) (Keep for yourselves) your gift in which you are exulting.

(41) This sentence is not meant to express pride and vanity. What it means to say is this: “I have no desire for your wealth; I only desire that you should believe, or at least submit to a righteous system. If you agree to neither of these alternatives, it is not possible for me to accept the bribes of wealth and leave you free in the matter of a polytheistic and wicked system of life. What my Lord has given me is enough for me to cherish any desire for your wealth.

اِرۡجِعۡ اِلَیۡہِمۡ فَلَنَاۡتِیَنَّہُمۡ بِجُنُوۡدٍ لَّا قِبَلَ لَہُمۡ بِہَا وَ لَنُخۡرِجَنَّہُمۡ مِّنۡہَاۤ اَذِلَّۃً وَّ ہُمۡ صٰغِرُوۡنَ ﴿۳۷﴾

(27-37) Envoy, go back to those who sent you and we shall certainly come upon them with hosts (42) whom they will be unable to resist. We shall drive them out from there, and they will suffer humiliation and disgrace."

(42) There is a subtle gap between this and the previous sentence, which one can easily fill up by a careful study of the discourse. It means this: “O messengers, take these gift back to the people who have sent you. They will either have to yield to our first proposal, i.e. they should come before us as Muslims, or we shall bring forces against them.”

قَالَ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْمَلَؤُا اَيُّكُمْ يَاْتِيْنِيْ بِعَرْشِهَا قَبْلَ اَنْ يَّاْتُوْنِيْ مُسْلِمِيْنَ ۝٣٨

(27-38) Solomon said: (43) "My nobles, which of you can bring me her throne before they come to me in submission?" (44)

(43) The details of the story that have been omitted are to the effect. The envoys returned to the queen with the gift and made a report of what they had seen and heard. The queen decided on the basis of what she heard about the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) to make a visit to Jerusalem to see him personally. She left Saba for Palestine accompanied by her royal entourage and sent a message to Solomon's court that she was coming to personally hear the invitation from the king and to have a direct talk with him. Here, the story is resumed from the time when the queen had reached near Jerusalem and was going to appear before Solomon (peace be upon him) in a day or two.

(44) That is, the same throne about which the hoopoe (hudhud) had reported, "She has a splendid throne." Some commentators have given a strange interpretation here. They say that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) wanted to have the throne before him before the queen's arrival because he wanted to take possession of it. For, he feared that if the queen became a Muslim. It would be unlawful to take possession of her property without her approval: therefore, he made haste to have the queen's throne with him even before her arrival in Jerusalem, because at that time it was lawful to take it into his possession. May Allah pardon us! This is a strange concept about the intention of a prophet. Why should one not understand the verse in the light that Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) wanted to show a miracle also to the queen and her courtiers besides preaching his message so that she might know what extraordinary powers Allah, Lord of the worlds, had granted His prophet so that she might be convinced that Solomon (peace be upon him) was surely a prophet of Allah? Some modern commentators have put an even more strange meaning on this verse. They translate the verse thus: "Which of you can bring me a throne for the queen:" whereas the Quran has used the word bi-arshi-ha which means

“her throne”, and not biarshil- laha, “a throne for her”. They mistranslate the verse in order to get rid of what the Quran has stated that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) wanted the queen’s own throne to be brought froth Yaman to Jerusalem and that too before the queen’s arrival.

قَالَ عِفۡرِيتٌ مِّنَ الۡجِنِّ اَنَا اٰتِيۡكَ بِهٖ قَبۡلَ اَنۡ تَقُوۡمَ مِنۡ مَّقَامِكَ ؕ وَاِنِّيۡ عَلَيۡهِ لَقَوِىٌّ اَمِيۡنٌ ﴿۳۹﴾

(27-39) A stalwart of the jinn said: "I will bring it to you before you rise from your council. (45) Surely I have the power to do so and I am trustworthy." (46)

(45) From this it becomes obvious whether the jinns under the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) were, according to the interpretation of some rationalist commentators of the modern times, from among mankind or from among the hidden creation commonly known as jinns. Obviously, the sitting of the Prophet Solomon's court would at the most be of three to four hours, and the distance of Marib, capital of Saba, from Jerusalem was, even as the crow flies, not less than 1500 miles. To fetch a splendid throne of a queen from such a distant place in such a short time could not be possible for a man, even if he be a very strong and robust person. This task cannot be performed even by a jet plane of today. The throne was not lying in a jungle from where it had just to be fetched. It lay in a queen’s palace, which must have been well-guarded, and in the absence of the queen it must have been kept in a secure place. If a man had gone to fetch it, he should have been accompanied by a commando force so that he could overwhelm the guards and snatch away the throne. How could all this be accomplished before the rising of the court? This thing can be conceived only in connection with a real jinn!

(46) That is, “You can trust me in that I will not carry it away, nor steal any valuable thing from it.”

قَالَ الَّذِىۡ عِنۡدَهٗ عِلۡمٌ مِّنَ الۡكِتٰبِ اَنَا اٰتِيۡكَ بِهٖ قَبۡلَ اَنۡ يَّرۡتَدَّ اِلَيۡكَ طَرۡفُكَ ؕ فَلَمَّا رَاٰهُ مُسۡتَقِرًّا عِنۡدَهٗ قَالَ هٰذَا مِنۡ فَضۡلِ رَبِّىۡ ۖ لِيَبۡلُوَنِىۡۤ ءَاَشۡكُرُ اَمۡ اَكۡفُرُ ؕ وَمَنۡ شَكَرَ فَاِنَّمَا يَشۡكُرُ لِنَفۡسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنۡ كَفَرَ فَاِنَّ رَبِّىۡ غَنِىٌّ كَرِيۡمٌ ﴿۴۰﴾

(27-40) And he who had some knowledge of the Book said: "I will bring it before the twinkling of your eye." (47) When Solomon saw the throne placed firmly beside him, he cried out: "This is by the grace of my Lord so that He may test me whether I give thanks for (His Bounty) or act with ingratitude. (48) Whoever is grateful is so to his own good; and whoever is ungrateful, let him know that my Lord is Immensely Resourceful, Most Bountiful." (49)

(47) Nothing is known with certainty as to who this person was, what special knowledge he had and what book is referred to here, the knowledge of which he had. No explanation of these things has been given either in the Quran or in any authentic Hadith. Some of the commentators say that it was an angel, others say that it was a man. Then they differ as to the identity of the man. Someone mentions the name of Asaf bin Barchiah, who, according to the rabbinical traditions, was the Prince of Men. Someone says that he was Khidr, someone mentions some other name, and Imam Razi insists that it was the Prophet Solomon himself. But none of these has any reliable source for this information, and Imam Razi's opinion does not even fit in with the Quranic context. Likewise, about the book also the commentators differ. Someone says that it refers to Lauh-i-Mahfuz (the Preserved Tablet) and some other takes it for the Book of Law. But all this is mere guess work. Similar guesses have been made about the knowledge the man had from the book. We only know and believe what has been said in the Quran, or what becomes evident from its words. In any case the person was not from among the jinns, and possibly he was a man. He possessed some extraordinary knowledge, which had been derived from some Divine Book (al-Kitab). The jinn had claimed to fetch the throne within a few hours by means of his physical strength; this man fetched it in a moment by the power of his knowledge.

(48) The words of the Quran are very clear in this regard. This person’s claim did not remain a claim like the jinn’s, but, in fact, as soon as he made the claim the throne was seen placed before the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) the next moment. Just consider these words:

“I will bring it to you before that your gaze returns to you. Then when he saw it placed before him.”

Anyone who reads these words, regardless of the extraordinary nature of the event, will surely understand that no sooner did the person utter these words than the event as claimed by him took place forthwith. There is, therefore, no need to make far-fetched interpretations of this plain matter. Then, on seeing the throne, the Prophet Solomon’s exclaiming, “This is from the favor of my Lord, that He may test me whether I give thanks or I am ungrateful” can be relevant only if the event be extraordinary; otherwise if only a skillful craftsman of the king had hurriedly made or arranged a throne for the queen, it could not be so novel an event at which the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) should have spontaneously exclaimed: “This is from the favor of my Lord” and feared that the prompt arrangement of a throne for the honorable guest might cause him to become ungrateful to Allah instead of being grateful. After all, there could be no question of a believing ruler’s becoming involved in vanity and self-conceit on this small achievement, especially when he was not merely an ordinary believer but a Prophet of Allah.

As for the question as to how a royal throne was fetched over a distance of 1,500 miles in the twinkling of an eye, it can be briefly answered thus: “The concepts of time and space, and matter and movement, that we have formed on the basis of our experiments and observations, are only applicable to us. These concepts are not correct in respect to God, nor is He bound by these. Not to speak of an ordinary throne, His power can make the sun; and even much larger stars, travel millions of millions of miles in the matter of moments. The God who by His one command brought this huge universe into being, has the power to have moved the throne of the queen of Sheba at a speed greater than the speed of light. In this very Quran it has been stated that Allah, by His powers, took his servant Muhammad (peace be upon him) from Makkah to Jerusalem and also brought him back in the same night.

(49) That is, He does not stand in need of somebody's gratefulness. His Godhead is neither enhanced by an iota by somebody's gratefulness, nor diminished by that amount by somebody's ingratitude or thanklessness. He is Sovereign in His own right. His Sovereignty is not dependent on His creation's acknowledgment or rejection. The same thing has been expressed in the Quran through the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him): "If you prove thankless, you and all the dwellers of the earth, (you should know that) Allah is All-Sufficient and worthy of all praise by Himself." (Surah Ibrahim: Ayat 8). The same theme is contained in a Hadith Qudsi related in Sahih-Muslim saying:

like the heart of the most righteous person among you, it will not cause any increase in My Kingdom; and O My servants, if you all men and jinns, from the beginning to the end, together become like the heart of the most sinful person among you, it will not cause any decrease in My Kingdom. O My servants, it is your own deeds which I credit to your account, and then fully recompense you for them. So, whoever receives something good, let him be grateful to Allah, and whoever receives something else, let him curse his own self only".

قَالَ نَكِّرُوا لَهَا عَرْشَهَا نَنظُرْ أَتَهْتَدِي أَمْ تَكُونُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٢٧:٤١﴾

(27:41) Solomon said: (50) " Set the throne before her casually, and let us see whether she gets to the Truth or is one of those who are not guided to what is right." (51)

(50) As to how the queen reached Jerusalem and how she was received, has been omitted. The story is resumed from the time when she had arrived at the palace to see Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him).

(51) This is a meaningful sentence, which means: (1) "Whether she understands or not that it is her own throne which has been fetched in no time from her capital to distant place like Jerusalem;" and also (2) "whether she is guided aright after seeing this wonderful miracle, or persists in her error." This refutes the wrong idea of the people who say that the Prophet Solomon

(peace be upon him) intended to take possession of the throne. Here he himself clearly says that he had done this in order to help the queen see guidance.

فَلَمَّا جَآءَتۡ قِيلَ أَهَٰكَذَا عَرۡشُكِۖ قَالَتۡ كَأَنَّهُۥ هُوَۚ وَأُوتِينَا ٱلۡعِلۡمَ مِن قَبۡلِهَا وَكُنَّا مُسۡلِمِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾

(27-42) When the Queen arrived, she was asked: "Is your throne like this one?" She said: "It seems as if it is the same. (52) We had already come to know this and we had submitted ourselves." (53)

(52) This also refutes the speculations of those people who depict the event in a manner as though the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) wanted to have a throne made for the queen and for this purpose he invited tenders and a strong robust artisan offered to make him a throne in the matter of a few hours, but an expert craftsman submitted that he could make and produce it in no time. This whole guess-work is destroyed by the tact that Solomon (peace be upon him) himself ordered the throne to be fetched before him (Ayat 38), and when it had been fetched, ordered his servants to set it before the queen casually (Ayat 41), and then when she arrived, she was asked whether her throne was like that (Ayat 42), and she answered, “(It is) as though it were the very one.” Obviously, there could he no room for the absurd interpretations in the face of such a clear statement of facts. If there is still any doubt left, it can be satisfied by the next sentence.

(53) That is, “Even before we saw this miracle, we had been convinced by what we had heard of Solomon (peace be upon him) that he was a Prophet of Allah, and not merely a ruler of a kingdom.” After seeing the throne and saying, “(It is) as though it were the very one”, what could be the relevance of adding this sentence if it is supposed that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) had gotten a throne manufactured and set the same before her? Even if it is assumed that no effort was spared to have a throne manufactured closely resembling that of queen’s

throne, what could have made a sun-worshiping queen exclaim “We had already known this and we had become Muslims!”

وَ صَدَّ ۚ ا مَا كَانَتۡ ۚ بُدُ ۚ ۡ رِ ۡنِ اللّٰ ۡ اِنَّ ۚ ا كَانَ ۚ تِ ۡ رَقَ ۡ مٍ كٰفِرِيۡنَ ۚ ۴۳

(27-43) What prevented her (from accepting the True Faith) was her worshipping deities other than Allah, for she belonged to an unbelieving people. (54)

(54) This sentence has been added by Allah to clarity the queen’s position, saying that she was not obdurate and stubborn. She had been an unbeliever till then mainly because she came of an unbelieving people. As she had become accustomed to bowing down before a false deity since her childhood, it had become a hindrance for her to the right way. As soon as she came in contact with the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him), she discerned the right way and the hindrance was removed forthwith.

قِيۡلَ لَ ۚ ا ۡ ا خُلِى الصَّ ۡ حَ فَلَمَّا رَاَتۡ ۡ حَسِبَتۡ ۡ لُجَّ ۚ وَّ كَشَفَ ۡ عَ سَاقَيۡ ۡ ؕ قَالَ اِنَّ ۚ صَ ۡ حٌ مُّمَرَّدٌ ۡ مِّ قَوَارِ ۡ يۡ ۡ رَ ۡ قَالَ ؕ رَبِّ اِنِّ ۡ ظَلَ ۡ تُ ۡ نَ ۡ سِ ۡ وَ اَ ۡ لَ ۡ تُ مَعَ سُلَ ۡ مٰنَ لِلّٰرَبِّ ا ۡ عٰلَمِ ۡ رَ ۡ ۡ ۴۴

(27-44) She was told: "Enter the palace." But when she saw it, she thought it was a pool of water and she bared both her calves (to enter into it). Solomon said: "This is a slippery floor of crystal." (55) Thereupon she cried out: "My Lord, I have been inflicting much wrong on myself. Now I submit myself with Solomon to Allah, the Lord of the whole Universe." (56)

(55) This was the last thing that opened queen’s eyes. The first thing was Solomon’s (peace be upon him) letter that began with the name of the All-Compassionate, the All- Merciful Allah, a way different front the common custom prevalent among the kings. The second was his rejection of her gifts, which made the queen understand that he was a different kind of king. The third was the report made by the queen’s envoys from which she came to know about Solomon's pious life, his wisdom and his message of the truth. This very thing had induced her to travel to Jerusalem to personally meet the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him),

and to this she had referred when she said: “and we had surrendered (to Allah)”. The fourth thing was the removal of her throne from Marib to Jerusalem in no time, from which the queen realized that he had Allah’s power with him. Now this was the last thing that removed every doubt from her mind regarding the unique and great personality of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him). When she saw that in spite of possessing every means of comfort and ease and a grand palace for a dwelling, he was so free from every conceit, so God-fearing and righteous and so grateful to God that he bowed before Him for every small favor and his life was so different from the life of those who were enamored of the world, she exclaimed the words that follow.

(56) This story of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) and the queen of Sheba has been related in the Old and the New Testaments and the Israelite traditions in different ways, but the Quranic narration differs from all others. A resume of the story as given in the Old Testament is as follows:

“And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to prove Solomon with hard questions at Jerusalem, with a very great company. When she came to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. And Solomon told her all her questions. And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel; his cup bearers also, and their apparel; and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her. And she said to the king, It was a true report which I heard in my own land of thine acts, and of thine wisdom: Howbeit I believed not their words, until I came, and thine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me: for thou exceedest the fame that 1 heard. Happy are thy men and happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee to set thee on his throne. And she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices great abundance and precious stones: neither was there any such spice

as the queen of Sheba gave king Solomon. And king Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatever she asked. So she turned, and went away to her own land, she and her servants." (2 Chronicles, 9: 1-12. A similar account is also found in 1 Kings, 10: 1-13).

In the New Testament, the following sentence only has been reported from a discourse of the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) about the queen of Sheba.

"The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here." (Matthew, 12: 42; Luke, 11: 31).

The story of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) and the queen of Sheba as given in the rabbinical traditions resembles in most parts with the Quranic version. The hoopoe's absence, then its arrival and reporting about Sheba and its queen, the Prophet Solomon's sending her a letter through it, the hoopoe's dropping the letter in front of the queen at the time when she was going for sunworship, the queen's calling for her ministers' council, then her sending of valuable gifts to Solomon, her traveling to Jerusalem and meeting him personally, her arrival in the palace and thinking that Prophet Solomon was sitting in the midst of a pool of water, tucking up her skirt in order to enter it. All this has been mentioned in these traditions as in the Quran. But there is no mention whatsoever in these traditions of the Prophet Solomon's reply on receipt of the gift, having the queen's throne fetched from Marib, his bowing down before God in thankfulness for every favor of His, and the queen's embracing the faith ultimately, at his hand, his belief in the oneness of God, etc. And worst of all, these wicked people have accused Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) of having committed adultery, God forbid, with the queen of Sheba, giving rise to an illegitimate race, which gave birth to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, who destroyed Jerusalem. (Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. XI, p. 443). The fact of the matter is that a section of the Jewish learned men have been highly critical of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him). They

have accused him of heinous crimes like violating the commandments of the Torah, of pride of government, pride of wisdom, of being a hen-pecked husband, and of luxurious living, polytheism and idol-worship. (Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. XI, pp. 439- 441). It is due to this propaganda that the Bible presents him only as a king instead of a Prophet. A king who was lost in the love of polytheistic women against the divine commandments, whose heart was turned away from God, and was turned to other gods and goddesses. (I Kings, 11: 1-11). As against this, it can be seen what great favor has the Quran done to the Israelites by cleansing the personalities of their elders of the filth thrown at them by themselves, and yet the Israelites, ungrateful as they are, look upon the Quran and him who brought it as their enemies.

وَ لَقَدۡ اَرۡسَلۡنَاۤ اِلٰی ثَمُوۡدَ اَخَاہُمۡ صٰلِحًا اَنِ اعۡبُدُوا اللّٰہَ فَاِذَا ہُمۡ فَرِیۡقٰنِ یَخۡتَصِمُوۡنَ ﴿۴۵﴾

(27-45) And [57] We sent to Thamud their brother Salih (with the Message): "Serve Allah," but all of a sudden they became split into two quarrelling factions. [58]

(57) For comparison, see (Surah Al-Araf: Ayats 73-79), (Surah Hud: Ayats 61-68), (Surah Ash-Shuara: Ayats 141- 159), (Surah Al-Qamar: Ayats 23-32), (Surah Ash-Shams: Ayats 11-15).

(58) That is, as soon as the Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) embarked on his mission, his people were divined into two groups, the believers and the disbelievers, and a conflict started between them as stated elsewhere in the Quran. The chiefs of his tribe, who were full of pride, said to those who had believed from among the oppressed people, “Do you know it for certain that Salih is a Messenger from his Lord?” They replied, “Indeed, we believe in the message with which he has been sent.” But those who had arrogant assumption of superiority, said, “We deny that which you believe”. (Surah Al-Aaraf: Ayats 75-76). One should note that precisely the same situation arose in Makkah at the advent of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The nation was divided into two factions and a conflict started between them. Therefore, this story fully applies to the conditions in which these verses were revealed.

قَالَ يٰقَوۡمِ لِمَ تَسۡتَعۡجِلُوۡنَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ قَبۡلَ الۡحَسَنَةِ ۚ لَوۡلَا تَسۡتَغۡفِرُوۡنَ اللّٰهَ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تُرۡحَمُوۡنَ ﴿۴۶﴾

(27-46) Salih said: "My people, why do you wish to hasten that evil rather than good [59] should come upon you? Why should you not seek pardon from Allah so that mercy be shown to you?"

(59) That is, “Why do you hasten in asking for a torment instead of some good from Allah?” The following saying of the chiefs of the Prophet Salih’s people has been related at another place: “O Salih, bring that scourge with which you threaten us, if you really are one of the Messengers.” (Surah Al-Araf: Ayat 77).

قَالُوا اطَّيَّرۡنَا بِكَ وَبِمَنۡ مَّعَكَ ؕ قَالَ طٰٓئِرُكُمۡ عِنۡدَ اللّٰهِ بَلۡ اَنۡتُمۡ قَوۡمٌ تُفۡتَنُوۡنَ ﴿۴۷﴾

(27-47) They said: "We augur ill of you and those who are with you." [60] Salih replied: "Your augury is with Allah. The truth is that you are a people who are being tried." [61]

(60) One meaning of what they said is: “Your movement has proved to be an evil omen for us. Since you and your companions have revolted against the ancestral religion, one or the other calamity is befalling us almost daily, because our deities have become angry with us.” In this sense, this saying is similar to the sayings of most of those polytheistic nations who regarded their Prophets as ominous. In Surah YaSin, for instance, a nation has been mentioned, which said to its Prophet “We regard you as an evil omen for ourselves.” (Ayat 18). The same thing was said by the Pharaoh’s people about the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). Whenever a good time came, they would say, “This is but our due”, and when there was a bad time, they would ascribe their calamities to Moses and his companions. (Surah Al-Araf Ayat 130). Almost similar things were said in Makkah about the Prophet (peace be upon him).

The other meaning of their saying is this: “Your advent has stirred up divisions in our nation. Before this we were a united

people, who followed one religion. Your ominous coming has turned brother against brother, and separated son from father." This very accusation was being brought against the Prophet (peace be upon him) by his opponents over and over again. Soon after he started his mission of inviting the people to the faith, the delegation of the chiefs of the Quraish, who went to Abu Talib, had said, "Give up to us this nephew of yours: he has opposed your religion and your forefathers' religion and has sown discord among your people, and has held the whole nation as foolish."

On the occasion of Hajj, when the disbelievers of Makkah feared that the visitors from outside might be influenced by the Prophet (peace be upon him), they held consultations and decided to approach the Arab tribes and tell them: "This man is a sorcerer, who by his sorcery separates son from his father, brother from his brother, wife from her husband, and man from his family."

(61) That is, "The truth is not that which you understand it to be. The fact which you have not yet realized is that my advent has put you to the test. Until my arrival you were following a beaten track in your ignorance. You could not recognize the truth from the falsehood; you had no criterion for judging the genuine from the counterfeit; your worst people were lording over your best people, who were rolling in the dust. But now a criterion has come against which you will all be judged and assessed. Now a balance has been set up publicly, which will weigh everybody according to his true worth. Now both the truth and the falsehood have been made manifest. Whoever accepts the truth will weigh heavy whether he was not being held even worth a farthing so far; and whoever persists in falsehood will not weigh a gram even though he was being esteemed as the chief of the chiefs before this. Now the judgment will not be based on the nobility or otherwise of the family one came of, or the abundance of the means and resources that one possessed, or one's physical strength, but on this whether one accepted the truth gracefully or preferred to remain attached to falsehood."

وَ كَانَ فِی الۡمَدِیۡنَۃِ تِسۡعَۃُ رَہۡطٍ یُّفۡسِدُوۡنَ فِی الۡاَرۡضِ وَ لَا یُصۡلِحُوۡنَ ﴿۴۸﴾

(27-48) Now there were nine ring-leaders (62) in the city who created corruption in the land and never worked to set things right.

(62) That is, nine chiefs of the tribes each of whom had a band of followers with him.

قَالُوۡا تَقَاسَمُوۡا بِاللّٰهِ لَنُبَيِّتَنَّهٗ وَاَهۡلَهٗ ثُمَّ لَنَقُوۡلَنَّ لِوَلِيِّهٖ مَا شَهِدۡنَا مَهۡلِكَ اَهۡلِهٖ وَ اِنَّا لَصٰدِقُوۡنَ ۴۹

(27-49) They said: "Swear to one another in the name of Allah that we shall make a sudden night swoop on Salih and his family and will then tell their heirs (63) that we did not witness the destruction of his family. We are indeed truthful." (64)

(63) “The guardian”: the chief of the Prophet Salih’s (peace be upon him) tribe, who, according to the ancient tribal tradition and custom, could make a claim to blood vengeance. The same was the position in Makkah of the Prophet’s uncle (peace be upon him), Abu Talib. The Quraish were hesitant that if they attacked and killed the Prophet (peace be upon him), Abu Talib, the chief of Bani Hashim, would come out with a claim to blood vengeance on behalf of his clan.

(64) This precisely was the kind of plot which the Makkan chiefs of the clans were devising against the Prophet (peace be upon him), and they devised the same ultimately on the occasion of migration (Hijrah) to kill him. They decided that men from all the clans would attack him in a body so that the Bani Hashim could not hold any one of the clans as responsible for the murder, and, therefore, would find it impossible to fight all of them at one and the same time.

وَ مَكَرُوۡا مَكۡرًا وَّ مَكَرۡنَا مَكۡرًا وَّ هُمۡ لَا يَشۡعُرُوۡنَ ۵۰

(27-50) Thus they planned and We too planned, the while they did not know. (65)

(65) That is, “Before they could make the night attack on the Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) at the appointed time, Allah sent down His scourge which destroyed their whole nation completely. It appears that they made this plot after hamstringing the she-camel. According to (Surah Hud: Ayat 65), when they had killed the she-camel, Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) gave them a notice to enjoy life in their houses for three more days, for then they would be seized by the torment. At this they might have thought that the torment with which Salih (peace be upon him) threatened them might come or might not, but they must take the vengeance on Salih himself. Therefore, most probably they chose the same night for the attack which Allah had appointed for sending down the torment, and thus were struck down by Allah even before they could touch the Prophet Salih (peace be upon him).”

فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ مَكْرِهِمْ أَنَّا دَمَّرْنٰهُمْ وَقَوْمَهُمْ أَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٥١﴾

(27-51) So see what was the outcome of the plan they made: We utterly destroyed them and their people, all of them.

فَتِلْكَ بُيُوْتُهُمْ خَاوِيَةً بِمَا ظَلَمُوْا ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾

(27-52) Now behold their houses that lie in utter ruins because of their wrong-doing. Verily there is a Sign in this for the people who know. (66)

(66) That is, the ignorant people will say, “There is no link between the Prophet Salih (peace be upon him) and his shecamel and the earthquake which struck the people of Thamud. These things have their natural causes. Their occurrence or otherwise has nothing to do with the piety and wickedness of the people of a place, with their highhandedness or their show of mercy. It is meaningless merely to say that such and such a city or land was filled with sin and wickedness, and therefore, it was overwhelmed by flood, or its habitation turned upside down by an earthquake, or it was ruined by a sudden disaster.” But the people who possess knowledge know that this universe is being ruled by an All-Wise, All-Knowing One Who is deciding the destinies. His

decisions are not subject to physical causes, but the physical causes are subject to His will. His decisions to debase or exalt nations are not taken blindly but with wisdom and justice. In His Book of Law there is also included the principle of retribution, according to which the wicked are made to suffer for their evil deeds even in this world, on moral grounds. The people who are aware of these realities, cannot explain away the occurrence of an earthquake by citing physical and natural causes; they will rather look upon them as the scourge of warning for themselves, and they will learn lessons from it. They will try to understand those moral causes because of which the Creator annihilated a flourishing nation, which He Himself had created. They will divert their conduct and attitude from the track that brings Allah's wrath to the way that joins them to His mercy.

وَ اَ نۡجَیۡنَا الَّذِیۡ نَ اٰمَنُیۡ ا وَ کَانُوۡ ا یَتَّقُوۡنَ ﴿۵۳﴾

(27-53) And We delivered those who believed and were wont to avoid disobeying (Allah).

وَ لُوۡطًا اِ ذۡ قَالَ لِقَوۡمِہٖۤ اَتَاۡ تُ وۡنَ الۡفَاحِشَۃَ وَ اَ نۡ تُ مۡ تُبۡصِرُوۡنَ ﴿۵۴﴾

(27-54) We also sent Lot, (67) and recall when he told his people: "Do you commit shameless acts with your eyes open? (68)

(67) For comparison, see (Surah Al-Araf: Ayats 80-84); (Surah Hud: Ayats 74-83); (Surah Al-Hijr: Ayats 57-77); (Surah Al-Anbiya: Ayats 71-75); (Surah Ash-Shuara: Ayats 160-174); (Surah Al-Ankabut: Ayats 28-75); (Surah As-Saffat: Ayats 133-138); (Surah Al-Qamar: Ayats 33-39).

(68) This can have several meanings and probably all are implied: (1) “That you are not unaware of this act’s being wicked, but you commit it knowing it to be so”. (2) “You are also not unaware that the man has not been created for the man’s sexual desire, but the intimate relationship is between man and woman, and the distinction between them (man and woman) is not such as you cannot perceive, yet with open eyes you commit this abominable act.” (3) “You indulge in this indecency publicly when

there are people watching you", as stated in (Surah Al-Ankabut: Ayat 29), thus: "And you indulge in indecencies in your assemblies."

اَئِنَّكُمۡ لَتَاۡتُوۡنَ الرِّجَالَ شَهۡوَةً مِّنۡ دُوۡنِ النِّسَآءِ ؕ بَلۡ اَنۡتُمۡ قَوۡمٌ تَجۡهَلُوۡنَ ﴿۵۵﴾

(27-55) Do you lustfully approach men instead of women? Nay, you engage in acts of sheer ignorance." (69)

(69) The word jahalat here has been used in the sense of folly and stupidity. But even if it is taken in the sense of ignorance and lack of knowledge, it will mean: "You do not know the evil consequences of your acts. You only know that you are deriving sensual pleasure, but you do not know what severe punishment awaits you for this criminal and heinous pleasure-seeking. The scourge of Allah is ready to strike you but you are engaged in a senseless, filthy game with impunity.

فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوۡمِهٖۤ اِلَّاۤ اَنۡ قَالُوۡۤا اَخۡرِجُوۡۤا اٰلَ لُوۡطٍ مِّنۡ قَرۡيَتِكُمۡ ۚ اِنَّهُمۡ اُنَاسٌ يَّتَطَهَّرُوۡنَ ﴿۵۶﴾

(27-56) But this had only one answer from his people. They said: "Expel Lot's folk from your city. They pretend to be absolutely clean."

فَاَنۡجَيۡنٰهُ وَاَهۡلَهٗۤ اِلَّا امۡرَاَتَهٗ ۫ قَدَّرۡنٰهَا مِنَ الۡغٰبِرِيۡنَ ﴿۵۷﴾

(27-57) Eventually We saved (Lot) and his family, except his wife. We had decreed that she should be among those who would remain behind. (70)

(70) That is, "The Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) had already been instructed not to take the woman along because she had to be destroyed along with her people."

وَاَمۡطَرۡنَا عَلَيۡهِمۡ مَّطَرًا ۚ فَسَآءَ مَطَرُ الۡمُنۡذَرِيۡنَ ﴿۵۸﴾

(27-58) And We rained down upon them a rain. It was an evil rain for those who had already been warned.

قُلِ الۡحَمۡدُ لِلّٰهِ وَ سَلٰمٌ عَلٰى عِبَادِهِ الَّذِيۡنَ اصۡطَفٰى ؕ ءٰٓاللّٰهُ خَيۡرٌ اَمَّا يُشۡرِكُوۡنَ ؕ﴿۵۹﴾

(27-59) Say, (O Muhammad): [71] "All praise be to Allah, and peace be on those of His servants whom He has chosen." (Ask them): "Who is better: Allah or the false gods that they associate with Him as His partners? [72]

(71) From here starts the second discourse, and this is its introductory sentence. This introduction teaches how the Muslims should begin a speech. That is why the truly Islamic-minded people have always been starting their speeches and discourses with the praise of Allah and salutation on His righteous servants. But now this is looked upon as characteristic of bigotry, and the present-day Muslim speakers have no idea of starting their speech with these words, or feel shy of doing so.

(72) Superficially the question whether Allah is better or the false deities appears to be odd. As a matter of fact, there can be no question of goodness in the false gods and, therefore, they cannot be compared to Allah. As for the polytheists, even they had no misconception that Allah could be compared to their gods. But they were asked this question in order to be warned against their error. For obviously none in the world would do anything unless he saw some good in it. Now if the polytheists served their deities and implored them for their needs instead of Allah, and presented their offerings before them, this would be meaningless unless they perceived some good in them. That is why they have been explicitly asked to consider whether Allah is better or their deities, for they could not face and answer this forth-right question. Even the most hardened polytheist among them could not venture to say that their deities were better. But if they acknowledged that Allah is better it would demolish their whole creed, for then it would be unreasonable to adopt the inferior against the superior creed. The Quran at the very outset made the opponents helpless. After this, pointed questions have been asked, one after the other, about the manifestations of the power and creation of Allah to the effect: “Whose works are these? Is there besides Allah any other god also associated with these

works? If not, why have you then set up these others as your deities?”

According to traditions, whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited this verse, he would immediately respond to it, saying: “Nay, but Allah is better, and He alone is the Everlasting and Exalted and High.”

اَمَّنۡ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الۡاَرۡضَ وَ اَنۡزَلَ لَكُمۡ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَاَنۡۢبَتۡنَا بِهٖ حَدَآئِقَ ذَاتَ بَهۡجَةٍ ۚ مَا كَانَ لَكُمۡ اَنۡ تُنۡۢبِتُوۡا شَجَرَهَا ؕ ءَاِلٰهٌ مَّعَ اللّٰهِ ؕ بَلۡ هُمۡ قَوۡمٌ يَّعۡدِلُوۡنَ ؕ ﴿۶۰﴾

(27-60) Who is it that has created the heavens and the earth and sent down for you water from the sky and then We caused to grow therewith orchards full of beauty whose trees you could never grow. Is there any god associated with Allah (in these tasks)?" (73) Nay, they are a people who are veering away from the Right Path.

(73) No one from among the mushriks could answer that someone other than Allah had done these works, or someone else was Allah’s associate in doing these. The Quran at other places says with respect to the pagans of Makkah and the Arab mushrikin: “If you ask them, who has created the heavens and the earth?” they will surely say: “The All-Mighty, the All-Knowing One has created them.” (Surah Az-Zukhruf: Ayat 9). “And if you ask them, who has created them?” they will surely say, ‘Allah’. (Surah Az-Zukhruf: Ayat 87), “If you ask them, who sent down rain water from the sky and thereby raised the dead earth back to life?” they will surely say, ‘Allah’. (Surah Al- Ankabut: Ayat 63). “Ask them, who provides for you from the heavens and the earth? who has power over these faculties of hearing and sight? who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living? who controls and directs the system of the universe?” they will surely say, ‘Allah’.” (Surah Yunus: Ayat 31). Not only the polytheists of Arabia but of the whole world generally acknowledged, and acknowledge even today, that Allah is the Creator of the universe and He alone controls and directs its system. Therefore, none of them could answer this question even obstinately for the sake of the argument that their deities were Allah’s associates in those

works, for if he had done so, thousands of his own people would have belied him saying that, that was not their belief.

This and the other questions that follow not only contain a refutation of the creed of shirk (polytheism) but of atheism as well. For example, in this first very question, it has been asked, “Who has sent down rainwater and caused to spring up by it beautiful gardens?” Just consider whether the presence of the substances essential for the growth of countless kinds of plant life, in the soil or near the soil, and the existence in water of those very qualities which are in accordance with the requirements of animal and vegetable life, and the evaporation of this water again and again from the seas, and its condensation and raining regularly in different parts of the earth from time to time, and the coordination between the soil and the air, the water, the temperature; etc, conducive to proper growth of plant life and fulfillment of the countless requirements of every sort of animal life, could be just accidental, or the result of the wise scheming and planning the supreme power and will of an All-Wise Designer. And is it possible that this accident should continue to recur constantly for millions and millions of years? Only an obstinate person who has been blinded by prejudice will regard it as accidental, for no truth loving, sensible person can make such a senseless claim or accept it.

اَمَّنۡ جَعَلَ الۡاَرۡضَ قَرَارًا وَّ جَعَلَ خِلٰلَهَاۤ اَنۡهٰرًا وَّ جَعَلَ لَهَا رَوَاسِىَ وَ جَعَلَ بَيۡنَ الۡبَحۡرَيۡنِ حَاجِزًا ؕ ءَاِلٰهٌ مَّعَ اللّٰهِ ؕ بَلۡ اَكۡثَرُهُمۡ لَا يَعۡلَمُوۡنَ ؕ ﴿۶۱﴾

(27-61) Who is it Who has made the earth a place of resort, (74) and has caused rivers to flow in its midst, and has placed upon it firm mountains, and has placed a barrier between two masses of water? (75) Is there any god associated with Allah (in these tasks)? Nay; but most of them do not know.

(74) It is not a simple thing for the earth to be a place of rest for the countless kinds of different creations living on it. If man looks into the wise harmony and coordination with which this sphere of the earth has been established, he is simply amazed and starts feeling that these harmonies and concordances and

relations could not be brought about without the grand design of an All-Wise, All Knowing and All-Powerful God. This sphere of the earth is floating in space and is not resting on anything, yet there is no commotion and no vibration in its movement. Had there been any vibration in it, such as we experience during an earthquake, life could not exist here. This sphere comes before the sun and hides from it regularly, which causes the alternation of the day and night. Had it turned the same face perpetually towards the sun and kept the other side always hidden, no life could be possible here, for on the bright side all life would have been shriveled up, and on the dark side all life would have been frozen to death. The sphere is enveloped by a five hundred mile thick atmosphere, which protects it against the continual bombardment of meteors, otherwise the twenty million meteors on the average, which dart towards the earth daily at 30 miles per second, would have caused such destruction as would not have allowed any man animal or tree to survive. The same atmosphere controls the temperature, raises clouds from the oceans, carries water to different parts of the earth and provides the required gases that sustain the human, animal and plant life. Without it the earth could not become a fit place of rest for any kind of animal life. Just under the earth's surface all those minerals and chemicals which are essential to the survival of vegetable and animal life have been provided in abundance. Wherever these natural resources do not exist, the land there cannot sustain any kind of life. A great store of water has been arranged on the earth in the form of oceans, rivers, lakes, springs and underground channels and snow on the mountains which melts and flows down in the form of rivers. Without such an arrangement there could be no life. Then the earth has been endowed with an appropriate gravitational pull by which it keeps the water and the air and all other things found on it attracted to it. If this pull had been a little less strong, it could not have stopped the air and the water from escaping. It would also have so much increased the temperature that life here would have become difficult. On the other hand, if the gravitational pull had been a little stronger, the atmosphere would have been denser, its pressure would have increased, evaporation would have become difficult and rains impossible; the cold would have increased and less areas on earth would have

been inhabitable; men and animals would have been shorter in size but heavier in weight, which would have made movement difficult. Besides, this sphere has been located at a suitable distance from the sun, which is most appropriate for the population here. If the distance had been longer, the earth would have received less of heat, the climate would have been much colder, the seasons much longer and the earth would be hardly inhabitable. On the other hand, if the distance had been shorter, the intensity of the heat along with other factors would have rendered it unfit for the kind of life man is living here.

These are a few of those harmonies and concordances due to which earth has become a place of rest for its population. A man with a little common sense who is aware of these facts cannot imagine for a moment that these concordances have come into existence without the design of an All-Wise Creator, as a mere accident, nor can he ever conceive that a god or goddess, jinn or prophet, saint or angel, could have had any hand in the creation and bringing into operation of this grand design.

(75) That is, the bodies of sweet and saline waters that exist on the earth but do not intermingle. Underground water channels mostly flow separately with sweet water and saline water side by side. Even in the middle of the bitter seas there exist at some places springs of sweet water; their current remains separate from the sea water and the sea passengers obtain their drinking water from it. See, (E.N. 68 of Surah Al-Furqan).

اَمَّنۡ يُّجِيۡبُ الۡمُضۡطَرَّ اِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكۡشِفُ السُّوۡٓءَ وَيَجۡعَلُكُمۡ خُلَفَآءَ الۡاَرۡضِ ؕ ءَاِلٰهٌ مَّعَ اللّٰهِ ؕ قَلِيۡلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُوۡنَ ؕ ۶۲

(27-62) Who is it Who heeds the prayers of the distressed when he calls out to Him and Who removes his affliction? (76) And who is it Who makes you vicegerents of the earth? (77) Is there any god associated with Allah (in this task)? How little do you reflect!

(76) The Arab polytheists themselves knew and acknowledged that Allah alone could avert a disaster. Therefore,

the Quran reminds them again and again that they implore Allah alone for help when they are confronted by a calamity. But when the calamity is removed, they start invoking others besides Allah. (See (E.Ns. 29 to 41 of Surah Al-Anam); (Surah Yunus: Ayats 21-22); (E.N. 46 of Surah An-Nahl); and (E.N. 84 of Surah Bani-Israil). And this is not only true of the Arab polytheists but of all polytheists; so much so that even the Russian atheists who are regularly campaigning against God-worship, had to invoke God when in the Second World War they were tightly encircled by the German forces.

(77) This has two meanings: (1) "He raises one generation after the other and one nation after the other"; and (2) "He gives you power and authority to rule in the earth".

اَمَّنۡ يَّهۡدِيۡكُمۡ فِىۡ ظُلُمٰتِ الۡبَرِّ وَالۡبَحۡرِ وَمَنۡ يُّرۡسِلُ الرِّيٰحَ بُشۡرًا بَيۡنَ يَدَىۡ رَحۡمَتِهٖ ؕ ءَاِلٰهٌ مَّعَ اللّٰهِ ؕ تَعٰلَى اللّٰهُ عَمَّا يُشۡرِكُوۡنَ ؕ ﴿۶۳﴾

(27-63) Who is it Who guides you through the darkness on land and sea? (78) And Who sends winds as heralds of good tidings ahead of His Mercy? (79) Is there any god associated with Allah (in this task)? Exalted be Allah above whatever they associate with Him in His Divinity!

(78) That is, "He has made such arrangements by means of the stars that you can find your way even in the darkness of the night." This is also because of the wise planning of Allah that He has created such means by which man can determine his direction and the way to his destination in his journeys by sea and land. In the day time he is guided by different land-marks and the direction of sunrise and sunset, and in the dark nights by the stars. In Surah An-Nahl this has been counted among the bounties of Allah: "He has placed land-marks to direct people, and by the stars, too, they are guided aright." (Ayat 16).

(79) "His mercy" the rain whose coming is promptly foretold by the winds.

أَمَّنْ يَّبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهٗ وَمَنْ يَّرْزُقُكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ وَالْاَرْضِ ءَاِلٰهٌ مَّعَ اللّٰهِ ؕ قُلْ هَاتُوْا بُرْهَانَكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾

(27-64) Who is it Who creates in the first instance and then repeats it? (80) Who is it Who provides you with sustenance from the heavens and the earth? (81) Is there any god associated with Allah (in these tasks)? Say: "Bring forth your evidence, if you are truthful." (82)

(80) The simple fact that has been expressed in this one sentence is so vast in meaning and detail that as one considers it more and more deeply, one goes on getting new and ever new proofs of Allah's existence and His unity. To the first place, take the question of the creation itself. Man by his knowledge has not been able to discover what life is, and how and where it comes from. So far the admitted scientific fact is that the mere arrangement of inanimate matter by itself cannot bring about life. Though the atheists assume, unscientifically, that life comes into existence automatically when all the elements essential for its creation combine together accidentally in the right proportion, yet if the mathematical law of chance is applied to it, the possibility of its occurrence comes to naught. All attempts made so far to produce animate matter out of inanimate matter experimentally in the laboratory have met with utter failure in spite of employing every possible care. At the most what has been created is DNA, which is the basic constituent of the living cell. This is the essence of life but not life itself. Life in itself even now is a miracle which cannot be explained scientifically except by saying that it is the result of a Creator's will and command and design.

Furthermore, life does not exist in a solitary form but in a limitless variety of forms. Man has so far discovered more or less a million species of animals and two hundred thousand species of plants on the earth, which in their constitution and special characteristics are so clearly and absolutely different from one another, and have been maintaining their distinctive features since the earliest known times so consistently that no Darwin could ever give any rational explanation of this great variety of life except the existence of the creative design of One God. Not a

link has so far been discovered between any two species, which might have broken up the form of the characteristics and constitution of one species and might be struggling to attain the characteristics and constitution of another species. The whole record of the fossils is without such a precedent, and among the existing animals also there is no such “eunuch” in its physical form. Any member of any species that exists is found with the distinctive features of its own species, and every story that is invented and announced from time to time about the discovery of some missing link is destroyed by the facts themselves. Therefore, the inevitable fact is that it is the All-Wise Designer, the Planner of creation, its Enforcer and its Fashioner, who has endowed life with all its countless different forms.

This was about the beginning of the creation. Now let us consider its reproduction. The Creator has placed in the constitution and make-up of every animal and vegetable species such a wonderful mechanism, which goes on producing through its countless members an endless race exactly with its own distinctive form and nature and characteristics, and it never has happened even by mistake that in these millions and millions of tiny sex workshops a certain workshop of a species may have turned out a specimen of a different species. The observations of modern Genetics in this connection present wonderful facts. Every plant has been so endowed with the capability of procreating its species that the new generation should possess all the distinctive characteristics of its own species and its every member should be distinguished in its special features from the members of all other species. This element for the survival of the species and its procreation is contained in a part of a cell of every plant, which can be seen with effort only through a most powerful microscope. This tiny engineer directs the whole development the plant precisely and definitely on the way which is the way of its own distinctive species. That is why all the plants that have emerged from a grain of wheat anywhere in the world have in turn produced only wheat. In no climate and in no region has it ever happened that from the whole race of a grain of wheat even a single grain of barley might have emerged. The same is the case with animals and men. None of them has been created just

for once, but on an inconceivably high scale a huge factory of reproduction is functioning every where, which is constantly bringing into existence, from the members of every species, countless other members of the same species. If one considers the microscopic germ of procreation which along with all the distinctive features and hereditary characteristics of its species is found in a small portion of its tiny self and then looks at the extremely delicate and complex physiological system and the subtle, intricate processes by which the procreative seed of every member of every species produces a member of the same species, one cannot conceive for a moment that such a tine and subtle system could come into being by itself, and then keeps on functioning by itself in millions and millions of the members of different species. This thing stands in need of an All-Wise Designer not only for its beginning but for its proper and perpetual functioning. It also needs an Administrator Who is at once Wise and Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent, who is ever watching and guiding the work of these workshops.

These facts destroy the very basis of an atheist's denial of God as also of a polytheist's creed of polytheism. A foolish person only can think that an angel or a jinn or a prophet or a saint has any hand in this work of God, but no unbiased person possessed of a little common sense can ever say that this huge workshop of production and reproduction with all its underlying wisdom and order started working just accidentally and has since been working so automatically.

(81) The question of the provision of sustenance also is not so simple as a person may feel it to be from a cursory study of this brief sentence. There exist on this earth millions of animal and vegetable species, each comprising billions of members having different food requirements. The Creator has arranged the means of sustenance for each species in such abundance and so within easy reach that members of no species ever go without food. Then the agencies of the earth and sky which combine and work together in this system are varied and countless. Unless there is the right kind of coordination and harmony between the heat, light, air, water and the diverse substances of the earth, not

a single particle of food can be produced. Can anyone conceive that this wise system could come about just accidentally without the intelligent planning and design of an All-Wise Creator? And can anybody in his senses imagine that in this system there could be any hand of a jinn or an angel or the spirit of a pious man?

(82) That is, “You should either bring a proof to show that someone else is an associate of Allah in these works, or, if that is not possible, you should at least explain by an argument why you should worship and serve any other god beside Allah, when One Allah alone has done, and is doing, all these works.”

قُلْ لَّا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ الْغَيْبَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ ؕ وَ مَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ اَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُوْنَ ﴿۶۵﴾

(27-65) Say: "None in the heavens or on the earth (83) has knowledge of the Unseen save Allah. They do not know when they will be raised to life." (84)

(83) In the preceding verses, arguments have been given to prove that Allah is the One and only Deity when considered from the viewpoint of creation, design and provision of the means of sustenance. Now in this verse it is being told that from the viewpoint of knowledge too, which is an important attribute of Godhead, Allah is Unique and without associate. Whatever creations are there in the heavens and the earth, whether angels or jinns, prophets and saints, or other men and other creatures, they have only limited knowledge. Something is hidden from all of them. The All- Knowing One is only Allah, from Whom nothing whatever of this universe is hidden, and who knows every thing of the past and the present and the future.

The word ghaib means something hidden and covered. As a term it implies everything which is unknown, and beyond one’s sphere of knowledge and information. There are many things in the world which individually are known to some human beings and unknown to others. And there are many others which taken as a whole have never been known to any of mankind, nor are known at present; nor will be known in the future: The same is

the case with the jinns and the angels and other kinds of creation: certain things are known to some of them and hidden from others, and many things hidden from all of them and known to none. All kinds of hidden things are only known to One Being, the All-Knowing Allah. For Him nothing is unknown, everything is known and evident.

In order to bring out this reality the method of the question as employed above with regard to creation, design and sustenance of the universe has not been adopted here. The reason is that the manifestations of those attributes are clear and evident which everyone sees, and which even the pagans and polytheists acknowledged, and do even today, that they are the works of Allah. So, the argument adopted above was: When all these works, as you admit, are being done by Allah, and no one else is His partner in these, why have you then made others His associates in Divinity, and in His worship? However, the attribute of knowledge has no perceptible manifestation which may be referred to and pointed out. It can be comprehended only by thought and reflection. Therefore, it has been put forward as an assertion instead of a question. Now it is for every intelligent person to think and consider for himself whether it is reasonable to believe that there should be any other than Allah, who is all-knowing, i.e. who knows all those conditions and things and realities which existed in the universe in the past; or exist now; or will exist in the future. And if there is none other who is all knowing, and cannot be, then is it reasonable to believe that any of those who are not aware fully of the realities and conditions and circumstances, cannot become the answerer of the people’s prayers, fulfiller of their needs and remover of their hardships?

There is a subtle relationship between Divinity and the knowledge of the unseen and hidden. Since the earliest times in whatever being has man imagined the presence of an attribute of Godhead, he has taken it for granted that it knows everything and nothing is hidden from it. In other words, it is self-evident for man to believe that making or marring the destinies, answering the prayers, fulfilling the needs and helping everyone in need of help, can be the work of the being who knows everything and from

whom nothing is hidden. That is why whomsoever man has regarded as possessor of the powers and authority of Godhead, he has necessarily regarded him as the knower of all hidden things as well. For his intellect testifies rightly that knowledge and authority are inter-dependent. Now if it is a fact that none but God is the Creator and the Designer and the Answerer of the prayers and the Providence, as has been proved in the foregoing verses, then it is also a self-evident reality that none but God is the Knower of the hidden things. After all, who in his senses could imagine that an angel or a jinn or a prophet or a saint or any other creature would be knowing where and what kinds of animals existed in the oceans and in the atmosphere and under the layers of the earth and upon its surface? And what is the correct number of the planets in the heavens? And what kinds of creatures exist in each of them? And where is each one of these creatures living and what are there requirements? All this should necessarily be known to Allah, because He has created them and He alone has to watch over their conditions and control their affairs and arrange for their sustenance. But how can some one else with his limited self have this vast and all-embracing knowledge and what has he to do with the functions of creation and sustenance that he should know these things?

Then this quality is also not divisible in the sense that a person, for instance, may be the knower of everything on the earth, or the knower of everything concerning human beings only, on the earth. It is in the same way indivisible as are God’s Creativity and His Providence and His Self- Subsistence indivisible. After all, how can it be possible for one to know all the affairs and all the conditions and states of all human beings who have been born in the world since the beginning of creation, and will be born till Resurrection, from the time their mothers conceived them till the time they will breath their last? And how and why will he know all this? Is he the creator of these countless multitudes? Did he create their seed in their fathers’ sperm-drop? Did he mold and shape them in their mother’s womb? Did he arrange for their normal birth? Did he make the destiny of each one of them? Is he responsible for taking decisions with regard to their life and death, their health and ill-health, their prosperity and adversity,

and their rise and fall in the world? And since when did he become responsible for it? Since before his own birth or since after it? And how can these responsibilities remain confined only to human beings? This is only a part of the universal administration of the heavens and the earth. The Being Who is controlling the whole universe is the Being Who alone can be responsible for the creation and death of men, for restricting and extending their provisions and for making and marring their destinies.

That is why it is a fundamental article of Islam that none other than Allah is the Knower of the hidden and unseen things. Allah may disclose whatever of His information He wills to whomsoever of His servants He pleases and blesses him with the knowledge of one or more of the hidden things as a whole. Being the Knower of all hidden and unseen things is the attribute only of Allah, Who is the Lord of all creation “He alone has the keys of the ‘unseen’ of which none has the knowledge but He.” (Surah Al-Anam: Ayat 59). “Allah alone has the knowledge of the Hour: He alone sends down the rain and He alone knows what is (taking shape) in the wombs of the mothers. No living being knows what he will earn the next day, nor does anybody know in what land he will die.” (Surah Luqman: Ayat 34). “He knows what is before the people and also what is hidden from them; and they cannot comprehend anything of His knowledge save whatever He Himself may please to reveal.” (Al Baqarah: Ayat 255).

The Quran does not rest content with this general and absolute negation of the knowledge of the hidden and unseen for the different forms of creation. But about the Prophets in particular, and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), it clearly says that they do not possess the knowledge of the hidden and unseen, and that they were given only that much knowledge of the hidden by Allah as was necessary to enable them to carry out the duties of prophethood. (Surah Al-Anam: Ayat 50); (Surah Al-Araf: Ayat 187); (Surah At-Taubah: Ayat 101); (Surah Hud: Ayat 31); (Surah Al-Ahzab: Ayat 63); (Surah Al-Ahqaf: Ayat 9); (Surah At-Tahrim: Ayat 3): and (Sutah Al-Jinn: Ayats 26-28) do not leave any room for doubt in this regard.

All these elucidations of the Quran support and explain the verse under discussion after which there remains no doubt that looking upon another than Allah as the knower of the hidden and unseen and believing that someone else also possesses the knowledge of all the past and future events, is an absolutely un-Islamic belief. Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Nasai, Imam Ahmad, Ibn Jarir and Ibn Abu Hatim have cited this saying of Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) through authentic reporters: “Whoever claimed that the Prophet (peace be upon him) knew what was going to happen the next day, accused Allah of lying, for Allah says: O Prophet, say, None in the heavens and the earth has the knowledge of the hidden and unseen but Allah.” Ibn al- Mundhir has reported this on the authority of Ikrimah, the well-known pupil of Abdullah bin Abbas: A person asked the Prophet (peace be upon him), O Muhammad, when will Resurrection be? And our territory is suffering from famine: when will it rain? And my wife is pregnant: what will she deliver, a boy or a girl? And I know what I have earned today; but what shall I earn tomorrow? And I know where I was born, but where shall I die? In reply, the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited (verse 34 of Surah Luqman)as cited above. Then the well-known tradition as reported in Bukhari; and Muslim and other works of Hadith also supports the same. According to it one of the questions asked by Angel Gabriel from the Prophet (peace be upon him) when he sat among the companions in human shape before him, was: “When will Resurrection be?” The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: “The one being questioned knows no better than the one questioning.” Then added, “This is one of those five things whose knowledge is possessed by none but Allah,” and then he recited the above-cited verse of Surah Luqman .

(84) That is “Those others about whom it is thought that they possess the knowledge of the hidden and, therefore, are regarded as partners in Divinity, are themselves unaware of their future. They do not know when will Resurrection be, and when will Allah raise them up again.”

بَلِ ادّٰرَكَ عِلۡمُهُمۡ فِى الۡاٰخِرَةِ ۚ بَلۡ هُمۡ فِىۡ شَكٍّ مِّنۡهَا ۚ بَلۡ هُمۡ مِّنۡهَا عَمُوۡنَ ۝۶۶

(27-66) Nay, but they have lost their knowledge of the Hereafter. They are steeped in doubt and uncertainty about it: rather they are blind to it. (85)

(85) After warning the people about their basic errors with regard to Divinity, it is being said that the reason why these people are involved in these errors is not that they have reached this conclusion after serious thought and deliberation that there also exist other beings who are Allah's associates in His Divinity, but the actual reason is that they have never considered this matter seriously. As they are unaware of the Hereafter, or are in doubt about it, or are blind to it, their heedlessness of the Hereafter has developed in them an utterly irresponsible attitude. They are not at all serious about the universe and the real problems of their own lives. They do not bother to know what reality is and whether their philosophy of life accords with that reality or not. For, according to them, in the end the polytheist and the atheist, the monotheist and the agnostic, all will become one with the dust after death, and nothing will bear any fruit.

The theme of the Hereafter is contained in this sentence of the preceding verse: "They do not know when they will be raised back to life." In that sentence it was said that those who are made deities, the angels, jinns, prophets, saints, etc., do not themselves know when will be the Resurrection. Here three things have been said about the common polytheists and the atheists: (1) They do not at all know whether there will be any Hereafter or not; (2) this lack of information on their part is not due to the reason that they were never informed of this, but because they did not believe in the information given to them and doubted its authenticity; and (3) they never bothered to consider with due thought and seriousness the arguments that were advanced about the coming of the Hereafter, but they preferred to remain blind to it.

وَ قَالَ الَّذِ یۡنَ كَفَرُوۡۤا ءَ اِذَا كُنَّا تُرٰبًا وَّ اٰبَآؤُنَاۤ اَئِنَّا لَمُخۡرَجُوۡنَ ﴿۶۷﴾

(27-67) The unbelievers say: "When we become dust, we and our forefathers, shall we really be brought out (from our graves)?

لَقَدْ وُعِدْنَا هٰذَا نَحْنُ وَ اٰبَآؤُنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ اِنْ هٰذَاۤ اِلَّاۤ اَسَاطِيْرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ۝۶۸

(27-68) We were told about this and so were our forefathers before us. But these are no more than fairy tales that have been recounted from ancient times."

قُلْ سِيْرُوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ فَانْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ۝۶۹

(27-69) Say: "Go about through the earth and see what has been the end of the evil-doers." (86)

(86) This brief sentence contains two strong arguments for the Hereafter as well as admonition:

Firstly, those communities who rejected the Hereafter could not help becoming criminals: they lived irresponsibly; they committed cruelties and all kinds of sins; and ultimately their moral depravity led them to utter ruin. This continuous experience of human history which is testified by the doomed communities all over the world, clearly shows that belief and unbelief in the Hereafter has a deep relationship with the soundness or the unsoundness of human behavior. Belief in it generates sound behavior and denial of it unsound behavior. This is a clear proof of the fact that belief in it is in accordance with the reality; that is why belief helps life to follow the right path. And rejection of it is against the reality; that is why rejection leads life into crooked alleys.

Secondly, the destruction of those communities which became criminals, one after the other, in the long experience of history is a clear pointer to the fact that this universe is not being ruled by the deaf and blind and senseless forces, but this is a wise system which is functioning according to the unalterable law of retribution, which is dealing with the human communities only on moral grounds. In which no community is given long enough rope

to commit whatever evil it likes and continue to enjoy life and commit injustices after it has once risen to power and prosperity. But when a wicked community happens to reach a certain stage, a mighty hand topples it from power and hurls it into the abyss of ignominy. Anyone who realizes this fact can have no doubt that the same law of retribution calls for the establishment of a new world after this world, where all individuals and nations and the whole mankind collectively should be rewarded and punished for their deeds. For the requirements of justice cannot be fulfilled only by the destruction of a wicked nation; this does not in any way redress the grievances of the oppressed people; this does not punish those who had enjoyed life and left the world before the coming down of the scourge; this does not also take to task those wicked people who went on leaving behind them legacies of immoralities and deviations for the coming generations. The torment that visited the nation only put a stop to the further tyrannies of its last generation. The court has not yet started working, to punish every wicked person for the evil done, to compensate every oppressed person for the losses incurred, and to reward all those who stood by the right against the onslaught of evil, endeavored to reform things and faced persecutions in this way throughout their lives. All this should necessarily happen at some time. For the continuous operation in the world of the law of retribution clearly points to the temperament and technique of the ruling government of the universe that it judges human deeds by moral standards and punishes and rewards them accordingly.

Besides these two arguments, the aspect of admonition in this verse is: “Learn lessons from the fate of the guilty people of the past, and do not persist in the foolish belief of the denial of the Hereafter, which, in fact, was responsible for making them criminals.”

وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُنْ فِي ضَيْقٍ مِّمَّا يَمْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

(27-70) (O Prophet), do not grieve over them, nor be distressed at their designs. (87)

(87) That is, “You have done full justice to your mission of preaching. Now if they do not listen to you, and wish to persist in their folly and deserve the Divine torment, you should not consume yourself by being distressed and grieved at their condition. Then, why should you feel vexed at their mean machinations that they are devising in order to fight the truth and to frustrate your movement of return? You have Allah’s power at your back. If they do not listen to you, they will only be harming themselves, not you.”

وَ يَقُ ولُ ونَ مَتٰى ه ذَا ال وَع دُ اِ ن كُ نتُ مۡ صٰدِقِ ينَ ٧١

(27-71) They also say: "Tell us when this threat will come to pass, if you are truthful." (88)

(88) The same threat which is implied in the preceding verse. What they meant was: “When will the scourge with which you threaten us overtake us? Why are we not being punished when we have not only rejected you but have also done whatever we could to frustrate your mission?”

قُ لۡ عَ سٰۤى اَ نۡ يَّكُ ونَ رَدِفَ لَكُ مۡ بَ ضُ الَّذِ ي تَستَ عۡجِلُ ونَ ٧٢

(27-72) Say: "The chastisement whose hastening you have been asking for, maybe a part of it has drawn quite near to you." (89)

(89) This is a royal way of saying a thing. When words like “may be”, “perhaps”, “no wonder”, etc. occur in the Divine discourse, they do not contain any sense of doubt, but express Allah’s Independence and Self-Sufficiency. Allah’s power is so great that His willing a thing and its happening is one and the same thing. It is inconceivable that He should will a thing and it should not happen. Therefore, when He says, “No wonder it may well be so”, it means, “It will certainly be so if you do not mend your ways.”

وَ اِ نَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُ و فَضۡ لٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَ لٰكِنَّ اَكۡ ثَرَ هُ مۡ لَا يَشۡ كُرُ ونَ ٧٣

(27-73) Indeed Your Lord is exceedingly bountiful to mankind. Yet most of them do not give thanks. (90)

(90) That is, “It is Allah's mercy that He does not seize the culprit immediately after his commission of a crime but gives him respite to reform himself. But most people are not grateful for this, and do not utilize the period of respite for their reformation. On the contrary, when they see that they have not been taken to task immediately, they form the idea that there is none to call them to account. Therefore, they are free to do whatever they like and they should not listen to any word of admonition”.

وَ اِنَّ رَبَّکَ لَیَعۡ لَمُ مَا تُکِنُّ صُوۡ رُ وَ مَا ہُمۡ یُعۡلِنُوۡنَ ﴿۷۴﴾

(27-74) Verily your Lord knows all that their hearts conceal as well as all that they reveal. (91)

(91) That is, “He is not only aware of their open misdeeds but is also fully aware of the malice and spite which they are concealing in their hearts and the evil plots which they are making secretly. Therefore, when the time comes to call them to account, they will be taken to task for everything done and thought.”

وَ مَا مِنۡ غَآئِبَۃٍ فِی السَّمَآءِ وَ الۡاَرۡ ضِ اِلَّا فِیۡ کِتٰبٍ مُّبِیۡنٍ ﴿۷۵﴾

(27-75) There is nothing that is hidden - be it in the heaven or the earth - but is recorded in a Clear Book. (92)

(92) Here by “Record” is not meant the Quran, but the Divine Record in which everything has been registered.

اِنَّ ہٰذَا الۡقُرۡاٰنَ یَقُصُّ عَلٰی بَنِیۡۤ اِسۡرَآءِیۡلَ اَکۡثَرَ الَّذِیۡ ہُمۡ فِیۡہِ یَخۡتَلِفُوۡنَ ﴿۷۶﴾

(27-76) Surely this Qur'an explains to the Children of Israel most of the matters concerning which they have disagreements (93)

(93) This sentence is connected with the foregoing theme as well as with what follows. In the first case, it means that it is a manifestation of the knowledge of the All-Knowing God that He is explaining through a gentile (non-Jew) in this Quran the reality of those events which are a part of the Israelite history, and which are being disputed by the learned men of the Israelites themselves. In the second case, it means that just as Allah has decided those disputes, so He will decide this dispute also which is going on between the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his opponents as to who is following the truth and who the falsehood. So, a few years after the revelation of these verses the decision came before the whole world. In the same land of Arabia and in the same clan of the Quraish there was no single person

left who was not convinced that it was Muhammad (peace be upon him) who was following the truth and not Abu Jahl and Abu Lahab. Even the children of these people admitted that their fathers were wrong.

وَ اِنَّهٗ لَ هُدًى وَّ رَحۡمَةٌ لِّلۡمُؤۡمِنِيۡنَ ۝٧٧

(27-77) and it is a guidance and mercy for the believers. (94)

(94) That is, “It is mercy and guidance for those who accept the message of the Quran and believe in what it presents. Such people will be saved from the errors in which their own people are involved. They will find the right way of life by means of the Quran and they will be blessed with such favors by Allah, which the disbelievers among the Quraish cannot even imagine today.” This shower of Allah’s mercy was also witnessed by the world after a few years. The same people who were living unknown lives in a corner of the Arabian desert and could at the most become successful raiders in the state of unbelief, suddenly emerged after their belief in the Quran as the guides of the world, leaders of the nations, makers of human civilization and rulers over a vast part of the world.

اِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقۡضِىۡ بَيۡنَهُمۡ بِحُكۡمِهٖ ۚ وَهُوَ الۡعَزِيۡزُ الۡعَلِيۡمُ ۝٧٨

(27-78) Indeed your Lord will decide between them [95] by His judgement. He is All-Mighty, All-Knowing.

(95) "Between them": Between the disbelievers of the Quraish and the believers.

فَتَوَكَّلۡ عَلَى اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّكَ عَلَى الۡحَـقِّ الۡمُبِيۡنِ ۝٧٩

(27-79) So put your trust in Allah for you are on the manifest truth.

(96) That is, "Neither can any power withhold His judgment from being enforced, nor is there any chance of an error in His judgment."

اِنَّكَ لَا تُسۡمِعُ الۡمَوۡتٰى وَلَا تُسۡمِعُ الصُّمَّ الدُّعَآءَ اِذَا وَلَّوۡا مُدۡبِرِيۡنَ ۝٨٠

(27-80) Surely you cannot make the dead hear you, [97] nor can you make the deaf hear your call if they turn back in flight, [98]

(97) "The dead" the ones whose consciences are dead and whose stubbornness, obstinacy and love of the usage and custom have deprived them of the sense of discrimination between the truth and falsehood.

(98) That is, "Who not only close their ears against what you say, but slink away from the place where they fear they aught hear what you say."

وَمَاۤ اَنۡتَ بِهٰدِ الۡعُمۡىِ عَنۡ ضَلٰلَتِهِمۡ ؕ اِنۡ تُسۡمِعُ اِلَّا مَنۡ يُّؤۡمِنُ بِاٰيٰتِنَا فَهُمۡ مُّسۡلِمُوۡنَ ۝٨١

(27-81) nor can you direct the blind to the Right Way, [99] preventing them from falling into error. You can make only those who believe in Our verses to hear the call and then submit.

(99) That is, “It is none of your job to pull them forcibly to the right way and drag them along with you. You can only tell them by the word of mouth and by your example that this is the right way and the way they are following is the wrong way. But how can you guide the one who has closed his eyes and is not at all inclined to see anything?”

وَ اِذَا وَقَعَ الۡقَوۡلُ عَلَيۡهِمۡ اَخۡرَجۡنَا لَهُمۡ دَآبَّةً مِّنَ الۡاَرۡضِ تُكَلِّمُهُمۡ اَنَّ النَّاسَ كَانُوۡا بِاٰيٰتِنَا لَا يُوۡقِنُوۡنَ۝ ٨٢

(27-82) And when the time for the fulfilment of Our Word against them will come, (100) We shall bring forth for them a beast from the earth who will speak to them because people did not believe in Our Signs. (101)

(100) That is, “When Resurrection which they are being promised will approach.”

(101) According to Ibn Umar, this will happen when there remains no one in the world to command the people to do good and forbid them to do evil. Ibn Marduyah has reported a Hadith on the authority of Abu Said Khudri; according to which the latter heard the same thing from the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. This shows that when man gives up the duty of exhorting others to do good and forbidding them to do evil, Allah will bring forth a beast to serve as the final warning just before Resurrection. This, however, is not clear whether it will be just one beast, or a particular species of beasts, who will spread all over the earth. The words daabbat-an-min-al-ard might contain both the meanings. In any case, what it will say will be: “The people did not believe in Allah’s revelations in which Resurrection was foretold. Now the same Resurrection is about to come; let everyone know that what Allah said was true”. The sentence, “The people did not believe in Our Revelations”, is either a part of the beast’s own speech, or Allah’s narration of its words. If these are its own words, the word “Our” will be understood in the style of an official who speaks on behalf of his government and not on his personal behalf. In the second case, since Allah is narrating

the beast's words, He has used "Our Revelations" in the normal sense.

As to the time and occasion of the appearance of this beast, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has said: "The sun will rise in the west and the beast will suddenly appear in the open daylight. Whichever of these signs appears first, it will be closely followed by the other." (Sahih-Muslim). In the other traditions related in Sahih-Muslim, Ibn-Majah, Tirmidhi, Musnad Ahmad, etc. the Prophet (peace be upon him) foretold that the signs of Resurrection as emergence of the Anti-Christ (Dajjal), appearance of the beast, smoke and the rising of the sun in the west will appear one after the other.
As for the nature, general appearance, place of appearance and other details about the beast, contradictory traditions have been reported, which only cause confusion and are not relevant to the object for which this thing has been mentioned in the Quran.

As regards the beast's speaking to human beings in a human language, this will be a manifestation of the power of Allah, Who can give the power of speech to anything He pleases. He will give this power only to a beast before the event of Resurrection, but when Resurrection will have taken place, each limb of man, his ears, his eyes, even his skin, will speak out and give evidence in the court of Allah, as has been clearly stated in (Ha-Mim As-Sajdah: Ayats 20- 21): "Then, when all will have reached there, their ears and their eyes and their very skins will bear witness against them concerning what they had been doing in the world. They will say to their skins, why have you borne witness against us? They will reply, the same God who has given speech to everything has given us speech."

وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ مِنْ كُلِّ اُمَّةٍ فَوْجًا مِّمَّنْ يُّكَذِّبُ بِاٰيٰتِنَا فَهُمْ يُوْزَعُوْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾

(27-83) Just imagine the Day when We shall muster from every nation a large group of those who gave the lie to Our Signs, and they shall be duly arranged in ranks

حَتّٰۤى اِذَا جَآءُوْ ؕ قَالَ اَكَذَّبْتُمْ بِاٰيٰتِيْ وَلَمْ تُحِيْطُوْا بِهَا عِلْمًا اَمَّا ذَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾

(27-84) until, when all of them have arrived, Allah will say: "Did you give the lie to My Signs even without encompassing them with your knowledge? (102) If that is not so, what did you do?" (103)

(102) That is, “You did not deny My revelations on the basis of some scientific investigation, which might have proved them to be false, but you denied them without any sound reason.”

(103) That is, “If it is not so, can you then prove that you treated them as false only after a thorough scientific investigation through which you came to know that the reality was not that which was being presented in these verses?”

وَ وَقَعَ ا لۡقَوۡلُ عَلَيۡهِم بِمَا ظَلَمُوۡ ا فَهُمۡ لَا يَنۡطِقُوۡنَ ۝٨٥

(27-85) And the Word will come to pass against them because of their wrong-doing: they will then be able to utter nothing.

اَلَمۡ يَرَوۡ ا اَنَّا جَعَلۡنَا الَّيۡلَ لِيَسۡكُنُوۡ ا فِيۡهِ وَ النَّهَارَ مُبۡصِرًا ؕ اِنَّ فِىۡ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوۡمٍ يُّؤۡمِنُوۡنَ ۝٨٦

(27-86) Did they not perceive that We had made the night so that they may repose in it and made the day clear and shining. (104) Surely there are Signs in this for those who believe. (105)

(104) That is, “Two out of the countless signs were such which they were observing at all times, whose benefits they were enjoying every moment, and which were not hidden even from a blind or deaf or dumb person. While they benefited by the rest at night and the opportunities afforded by the day, why did they not think that it is a system devised by an All-Wise Being, Who has established the relationship between the sun and the earth precisely to meet their requirements and needs. This cannot be a mere accident, for it clearly manifests purposefulness, wisdom and planning, which cannot be the characteristic of the blind forces of nature, nor the work of many gods. It can only be a system established by the One Creator and Master and Disposer,

Who is ruling over the earth, the moon, the sun and all other planets. From the observation of this single phenomenon they could judge that the alternation of the day and night testified to the truth that We have conveyed through Our Messenger and Our Book."

(105) That is, "It was not something incomprehensible either. There were among their own relatives, their own clan and their own brotherhood people like themselves, who had seen the same very signs and believed that the creed of God worship and Tauhid towards which the Prophet (peace be upon him) was inviting them was precisely in accordance with the truth and reality."

وَيَوۡمَ يُنۡفَخُ فِى الصُّوۡرِ فَفَزِعَ مَنۡ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَنۡ فِى الۡاَرۡضِ اِلَّا مَنۡ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ ؕ وَكُلٌّ اَتَوۡهُ دٰخِرِيۡنَ ؕ﴿۸۷﴾

(27-87) The Day when the Trumpet will be blown all those who are in the heavens and on the earth shall be terror stricken (106) - all except those whom Allah wills - and everyone shall come to Him utterly abject.

(106) For a detailed discussion of the blowing of the Trumpet, see (E.N. 47 of Al-Anam), (E.N. 57 of Ibrahim), (E.N. 78 of Ta Ha), (E.N. 1 of Al-Hajj), (E.Ns. 46, 47 of Ya Sin) and (E.N. 79 of Az-Zumar).

وَتَرَى الۡجِبَالَ تَحۡسَبُهَا جَامِدَةً وَّهِىَ تَمُرُّ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ ؕ صُنۡعَ اللّٰهِ الَّذِىۡۤ اَتۡقَنَ كُلَّ شَىۡءٍ ؕ اِنَّهٗ خَبِيۡرٌۢ بِمَا تَفۡعَلُوۡنَ ؕ﴿۸۸﴾

(27-88) You now see the mountains and consider them firmly fixed, but then they shall pass away even as clouds pass away. That will be the handiwork of Allah Who has created everything with perfect wisdom. He is well aware of what you do. (107)

(107) That is, "From such God you should not expect that after giving you the powers of intellect and discrimination and control over things, He will remain unaware of your deeds and actions

and will not see how you have been using the delegated authority in the earth."

مَّنۡ جَآءَ بِالۡحَسَنَةِ فَلَهٗ خَيۡرٌ مِّنۡهَا ۚ وَهُمۡ مِّنۡ فَزَعٍ يَّوۡمَئِذٍ اٰمِنُوۡنَ ﴿۸۹﴾

(27-89) Whosoever comes with good will receive a reward better than his deed, (108) and they will be made secure from the terror of that Day.

(108) The reward will be better in two ways: (1) It will be higher than what a person will actually deserve for his good deeds; and (2) it will be everlasting and for ever though the good act was temporary and its influence confined to a limited period only.

وَمَنۡ جَآءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَكُبَّتۡ وُجُوۡهُهُمۡ فِى النَّارِ ؕ هَلۡ تُجۡزَوۡنَ اِلَّا مَا كُنۡتُمۡ تَعۡمَلُوۡنَ ﴿۹۰﴾

(27-90) And whosoever comes with evil, they will be flung upon their faces into the Fire. Will you be recompensed for aught other than what you do? (109)

(109) That is, "Though the terrors of Resurrection will stun and confound the disbelievers, the believers will remain safe and secure from them, for everything in the Hereafter will be according to their expectations. They had already known from the messages brought by the messengers of Allah that Resurrection will take place, and a new world will be established when everyone will be called to account for his deeds. Therefore, they will neither be bewildered nor alarmed, which will be the case with those who had denied this Day and remained heedless of it, till their last breath in the world. They will also be satisfied because they had worked for this Day and had brought necessary provisions from the world for their success here. Therefore, they will not be stupefied and confounded as will be those who had invested all their energies and capabilities in their struggle for achieving worldly successes only, and had never thought that there would be a life hereafter for which they should make some provision. Contrary to them, the believers will be satisfied that the Day had, at last come, for the sake of which they had given up the unlawful benefits and pleasures of life and had undergone

hardships and toil. And they will not be deprived of the rewards of their works."

اِنَّمَاۤ اُمِرۡتُ اَنۡ اَعۡبُدَ رَبَّ هٰذِهِ الۡبَلۡدَةِ الَّذِىۡ حَرَّمَهَا وَ لَهٗ كُلُّ شَىۡءٍ وَّ اُمِرۡتُ اَنۡ اَكُوۡنَ مِنَ الۡمُسۡلِمِيۡنَ ۙ﴿۹۱﴾

(27-91) (Tell them, O Muhammad): "I have been commanded only to serve the Lord of this city that He has made inviolable, to serve Him to Whom all things belong. (110) I have been commanded to be of those that submit to Allah,

(110) At several places in the Quran it has been stated clearly that an evil will be punished in the Hereafter only to the extent of the evil committed, but a good act will be rewarded much more generously by Allah than what the doer will actually deserve for it. For more examples of this, see (Surah Yunus: Ayats 26-27); (Surah Al-Qasas: Ayat 84); (Surah Al-Ankabut: Ayat 7); (Surah Saba: Ayats 37-38); (Surah Al-Mumin: Ayat 40).

وَ اَنۡ اَتۡلُوَا الۡقُرۡاٰنَ ۚ فَمَنِ اهۡتَدٰى فَاِنَّمَا يَهۡتَدِىۡ لِنَفۡسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنۡ ضَلَّ فَقُلۡ اِنَّمَاۤ اَنَا مِنَ الۡمُنۡذِرِيۡنَ ۚ﴿۹۲﴾

(27-92) and to recite the Qur'an." So, whosoever is guided, his guidance will be to his own good. As for those who stray, tell them: "I am none but a warner."

وَ قُلِ الۡحَمۡدُ لِلّٰهِ سَيُرِيۡكُمۡ اٰيٰتِهٖ فَتَعۡرِفُوۡنَهَا ؕ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعۡمَلُوۡنَ ﴿۹۳﴾

(27-93) And say: "All praise be to Allah, Who will soon show you His Signs that you will recognize." Your Lord is not unaware of what you do.